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Chin Up, Anna!

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THOSE THEY LEAVE[illegible] BEHIND By ANN [illegible] INGTON

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New Masses

JULY 30, 1935

General Strike

NEXT to revolution the moneyed class fears a general strike—and this accounts for the immediate proclamation of martial law in Terre Haute, Gene Debs' home town, where 60,000 workingmen laid down their tools to protest the importation of strikebreakers. Gov. Paul V. McNutt, erstwhile hero of the American Legion, lost no time in taking the only action those of his class know—calling in the troops. Steel-helmeted National Guardsmen in full war-time regalia invaded the town to rescue the imported gangsters. Nevertheless, at this writing every enterprise in the town is shut tight. Even the daily Terre Haute Star closed down for the first time since it was founded in 1903. As the suddenly humanitarian publisher put it "A group of strikers threatening wreckage and violence invaded our office and we decided to suspend publication to protect loyal printing-arts workers." The workers have learned a big lesson. They saw how the newspapers sabotaged the general strike in San Francisco last year. This outbreak had been brewing for months, ever since the 600 employes of the Columbia Enameling Stamping Company formed picket lines demanding union recognition last March. When the company imported their gangsters, the lid blew off. Every worker in the county joined in with the militant leaders to overrule the supine officials of the Central Labor Union, who had continually counselled caution. Forty-eight locals united in a general strike at one A. M. July 22 because the gunmen had not been withdrawn. Latest dispatches inform us that the strikers are picketing despite a tear-gas barrage. The businessmen of the town too have grown wiser with experience. They turned down the military commandant's offer of troops to man the street-cars, even to wait on customers in the stores. The workingman is not the only one to learn the lessons of class struggle these days.

THE SNAKE CHARMER — *Reginald Marsh*

Author Minus Character

WHEN Luigi Pirandello last visited this country to attend the American production of his *Six Characters* he surely never dreamed—professional fantasist, though he is—that he would return a dozen years later as a press agent for fascism. With a Hollywood contract in one hand and a prepared press release in the other, the 1934 Nobel Prize winner for literature presented a sickening spectacle of intellectual and moral degradation. "You can't mix art with politics," he thundered; but every time he opened his mouth he made it clear that he comes here as an artist in uniform—the uniform of fascism. Despite current unrest, strikes and uprisings in Italy, Pirandello found it possible to proclaim that "the Italian people are following their Duce with absolute unanimity"—a statement which even the capitalist press must recognize as an inept propagandist lie. Throughout Pirandello's statement to the press, in which he unblushingly endorsed in advance Mussolini's planned attack on Ethiopia, his only deviation from the straight and narrow path of fascist missionary-work occurred in regard to the forthcoming film-version of his *Six Characters*. He said he "preferred Hollywood actors, of course to Italian actors." But he probably atoned for this un-fascist utterance by finding it impossible to attend an evening performance of Clif-

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ford Odets' plays. In a radio address that afternoon he found himself telling listeners in Italy, after a few hours' sojourn in America, that "the bond of friendship between Italians in America and Italians in their native land was now more secure than ever." This achievement of the old mystic was not available to American radio listeners.

CLARENCE HATHAWAY said a year ago in his debate with Lawrence Dennis, that it is not possible to argue with a fascist except on the barricades. Nevertheless, a number of prominent playwrights have been unable to remain silent with Pirandello's lies drumming in their ears. Sidney Kingsley, Elmer Rice, John Howard Lawson, Clifford Odets and others have publicly denounced Pirandello. The statement by Rose McClendon, director of the Negro Peoples' Theatre, is typical:

> I was no more surprised to hear of Pirandello's statement supporting the coming attack on Ethiopia than I was to hear that John Howard Lawson had risked his life in Alabama out of sympathy with the Negro people or that Clifford Odets had faced imprisonment in an effort to expose the terror used by Wall Street's puppet government against the Cuban people. Pirandello's statement shows how low the artist can fall under fascism. This mild old man doesn't hesitate to breathe fire in support of a war against the only free Negro nation on earth. Lawson and Odets do not hesitate to throw their art and their lives into the battle against fascism.

Widows and Orphans

THE widows and orphans who sent tearful telegrams to Congress demanding elimination of the "death sentence" clause in the Utility Holding Company Bill have been exposed. At least part of them were names culled from telephone directories by utility company employes. The Senate committee investigating lobbies has already discovered that the Associated Gas and Electric Company spent $700,000 to defeat the bill, $100,000 of which went to pay for spurious telegrams. This chicanery was uncovered when a Warren, Pennsylvania congressman noticed that many of the 816 wires he received came from persons whose names began with "B" but inquiries elicited the fact that in most instances supposed senders of the wires had taken no interest in the measure. The manager of the Warren Western Union office later admitted under oath that the wires were sent and paid for by the local manager of the Associated. But the originals of the telegrams were not available; they had been destroyed by the utility company manager who had paid for them. Senate investigators searched the files of the Associated and found that the company had also destroyed all of its own files relating to telegraphic protests. The Associated Gas and Electric Company is one of the largest and most unscrupulous of holding concerns; its domain extends from Maine to Florida, as far west as Illinois and as far southwest as Texas. Its stock is almost worthless and it has paid no dividends for several years.

THE administration is pushing the exposure to the limit because the Holding Company Bill was designed to curb excesses of such firms as the Associated. Very obviously, the company is of that kind described by the president as "bad." Middle-class stockholders are up in arms against great corporations which pay fancy bonuses and high salaries and default on dividends. The exposure of utility company tactics may force the lower house to reconsider the bill and there is reason to believe that the "death sentence" will be restored. At the same time the measure will not harm those companies which, according to the president, "perform a demonstrably useful function." For that reason the more enlightened capitalists are with the administration. They know that the old era of outright robbery is done for and they are sensible enough to see that they can allay discontent—at least temporarily—only by submitting to reforms that will conceal, but not prohibit, exploitation. The quarrel with the holding company racketeers is grist in Mr. Roosevelt's mill. It enables him to play the role of a reformer to his advantage in the 1936 campaign while he performs a real service to the cause that is dearest to his heart: the preservation of capitalism.

What Now, Dr. Holmes?

THE Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church in New York City, has put his foot in it. Dr. Holmes, professional liberal, specializes in seeing both sides of a question. No matter what the issue, the Reverend clears his throat and thunders, "on the one hand—" but quickly offsets any committment by the inevitable, "on the other—" Formerly, Dr. Holmes condemned Nazi torture and terror; the time has now arrived for him to balance any impression such partisanship might have made. A month in Germany seeing what the Nazis showed him has made Dr. Holmes fearful that he might have been unfair. Anxiously he reestablishes his reputation for "open-mindedness"—and incidentally takes a crack at the Soviet Union. Both attitudes are on the "must" list for liberals of the John Haynes Holmes variety. According to press interviews given by Dr. Holmes, Germany has taken the Soviet Union's place as the country "of significance in the contemporary world"; the reign of terror has ended; the importance of Hitler's leadership cannot be exaggerated; and the only opposition to Hitler today is in the Christian churches. As the echoes of the pastor's organ voice die away, headlines tell of another Nazi *pogrom* against the Jews. Dr. Holmes, having pondered deeply and finally, delivered himself of his conclusions—and was immediately proved wrong by a new outburst of terror and persecution in Germany. Unless brutality is "significant," Hitler's Germany can hardly be said to contribute to culture. Most European nations have sent delegations to visit class-war prisoners. They return home with reports of what fascism means to the working class, to culture. No such delegation has represented this country. Perhaps Dr. Holmes would like to return to Germany to complete his education. Or if such a mission would confuse Dr. Holmes' liberal attitude, a committee should go without him.

Free Krumbein!

TRAVELING incognito is only a technical violation of passport regulations, conveniently overlooked if you're in the good graces of the state department. Movie actresses do it every day and ship reporters always record the fact. Thomas Walker, Hearst's Russian expert, did it and got only a slap on the wrist in the shape of a suspended sentence. But Charles Krumbein, New York district organizer for the Communist Party, received a sentence of two years in the Lewisburg federal prison, to be followed by four years on probation, because he dared to use an assumed name to get a passport for a trip to China. Krumbein will be eligible for parole early in August and thousands of workers who know him as a tireless fighter are ap-

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pealing for mass support to secure favorable action from the Federal Board of Paroles at Washington and to force President Roosevelt to commute the sentence. The value of protest has already been demonstrated in the Krumbein case. Prison officials were forced to rescind an order prohibiting him from receiving radical literature and publications after a storm of protest letters and telegrams from all sections of the country. Similar procedure will open the prison doors.

The Roads from Rome

TROOPS pour into Italian Somaliland in preparation for the drive against Ethiopia. Heat and malaria and tropical diseases continue to take a heavy toll among the Italian workers and peasants who have been mobilized and shipped much against their will far from home. Now, Il Duce announces that he too will visit Africa—not on an over-crowded transport which passes slowly through the intense tropical heat, but by plane. He will review the army and launch the campaign. He might even watch a battle—from a safe distance. Mussolini does not plan to remain in Africa. He will not be rationed as to the amount of water he can drink. He will not face gas and artillery and machine-guns. He will not fight painfully through desert wastes into the treacherous mountain passes, nor will he be slaughtered in guerrilla warfare. He will make the glorious and heroic gestures expected of all demagogues and leave the dirty work to the soldiers. For every day it becomes increasingly clear that Mussolini insists on war. France backs him; England rakes up old imperialist treaties, endorses the division of Ethiopia and the extension of Italian influence. With the drive toward war, the pressure of mass protest augments, not only in Italy but throughout the world. Mussolini finds himself opposed by the Ethiopian State and the resentment of the working class and liberals of the world. He can start a war; but he risks signing his own death warrant at the same time. Supporting Ethiopia means defending a minority people against the aggression and oppression of imperialism. America, like all other nations, will rally in great demonstrations on August 3 to cement the united opposition of all who abhor another war to bolster finance capitalism. Mussolini can rant: but he must face an aroused working class and its allies in his adventure to bulwark Italian fascism.

On the Picket Lines

A. F. OF L. officials have developed routine method of breaking strikes. It has been tested, approved and put into regular practice. First, talk militantly. Then draw up an agreement with the employers that will bring the men back to work under the same conditions which caused them to strike originally. Order picket lines disbanded. If the workers refuse, let the state governor bring in the National Guard—and don't forget to threaten to revoke local union charters. Abe Muir, official of the 4-L union, went through all the above gestures, adding one variation—his lieutenants joined the vigilante Committee of 500 in Seattle to drive the Communists out of the labor movement. Opposing him stood the newly-organized Joint Strike Committee representing and responsible to the rank-and-file lumber workers who have tied up the entire fir belt in Eastern Washington and most of Oregon. Three A. F. of L. unions are involved. Muir has had his successes—he has been able to split the ranks of the strikes in several places and to inveigle them back to work. But he could not accomplish this without giving the men some gains. On the other hand, those mills which abide by the leadership of the Joint Strike Committee have been able to hold their lines even against troops. They have seriously threatened Muir's control of the union and will undoubtedly win greater benefits from the strike than those who have weakened in the face of Muir's threats. Once more a fundamental lesson is driven home: to be successful, strikes must be taken out of the hands of A. F. of L. officials and must be placed in the hands of strike committees selected from the ranks of the workers themselves.

A SIMILAR struggle within the ranks of the unions themselves goes on in Omaha where the street-car strike has broken out again after arbitration failed. The Central Labor Council refuses to endorse the conference called by the rank-and-file strike committee in support of the strike. The attempt is to choke the increasing militancy before it proves too big a threat to A. F. of L. officials. What the reactionaries fear most is the leadership and influence of the Communist Party which has supported the strike from the first and has urged rank-and-file leadership. The Communist Party has earned the undying hate of "respectable labor leaders": it supports the workers and exposes the continual attempts of the officialdom to sell out strikes and checkmate gains of the broad membership of the A. F. of L.

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Uncle Sam Forecloses

WHEN Uncle Sam went into the real-estate business through the Home Owners Loan Corporation, millions of Americans who had sunk their life savings into their homesteads, felt mightily relieved. They had watched their neighbors lose their homes to the mortgagees. They themselves found it increasingly difficult to meet payments. When Uncle Sam rescued them from the clutches of the bankers, the insurance company, the usurers of all descriptions, enthusiasm ran high for President Roosevelt. The hero had arrived in the nick of time, pocketbook in hand, had torn the mortgage from the villain's hands, and saved the old homestead. Unfortunately the play does not end there. The hero has grown long whiskers, usurped the villain's role and now demands payment himself. Headlines today tell the world that H.O.L.C. had foreclosed on 712 homes. "Forty suits a week are filed," the press informs us. The figure is rising fast. Uncle Sam, the real-estate man, isn't in the real-estate game for love, either.

The play really began at the turn of the century. "Own Your Own Home" was the popular American slogan. Small businessmen and skilled workers scrimped and saved, denied themselves a thousand and one small luxuries and many necessities to own their own home.

Unskilled immigrant workers saw in the buy-as-you-rent ballyhoo the fulfillment of their old-world hunger for land.

From 1900 to 1930 the percentage of non-farm families owning their own homes had risen from 36 to 46 percent. By 1935 the percentage had dropped to between 39 and 41 percent. The crisis has already caused from 10 to 15 percent of urban home owners to lose their homes and at the present rate of foreclosure the percentage of home ownership will be back to the level of 1900 by 1938. Today the nation's largest landlord is the Federal Government itself. A feeling of false confidence began to prevail with the realization that the mortgage on the old homestead had passed into the tender hands of good old Uncle Sam.

The landlord, as represented particularly by banks, insurance companies and building and loan associations, reached the height of his unpopularity during 1932 and the spring of 1933. All over the country farm and urban foreclosures were mounting to unprecedented peaks. In the last five years about a million and a quarter urban home owners lost their properties through foreclosure. In agricultural states eviction was answered by militant resistance and penny sales.

But Uncle Sam's entry into the real-estate business was in fact prompted by the desire to aid not the small home owners, but another class of "victims" of the foreclosure crisis. By 1935 practically every bank, insurance company and building and loan association in the country was actually insolvent. The real-estate market and real-estate securities had collapsed.

The farmers were even worse off. Large-scale urban real-estate projects fared no better. Over 2,000 major real-estate securities amounting to more than two billion dollars went into default between 1931 and 1934 (compiled from Standard Statistics Company reports). Banks and insurance companies were accumulating, in addition to bad debts, vast numbers of homes, farms and commercial buildings. But for the time being they could neither sell nor profitably rent these holdings. At this point our Uncle Sam enters. To the banks and insurance companies he showed a heart of gold beneath his smooth exterior. With the H.O.L.C. he took over some of the worst home mortgages, with the F.C.A. he took over some of the worst farm mortgages and with the R.F.C. he took over some of the worst apartment and office-building mortgages.

The extent of the H.O.L.C.'s operations was tremendous. It has granted loans on 877,000 homes, amounting to $2,650,000,000 (H.O.L.C., Summary of Refinancing Operations, June 20, 1935). This means that the H.O.L.C. has given loans on about one out of every eleven owner-occupied homes, or on about one out of every six *mortgaged* owner-occupied homes. Of this sum, nearly $2,500,000,000 went to the old mortgagees, the remainder going for back taxes, insurance, legal fees, reconditioning, etc.

The mortgagees got something better than New Deal promises. They were paid mainly with H.O.L.C. bonds, most of which carry interest at 4 percent, 3 percent and 2¾ percent. In January, 1934, these bonds were guaranteed by the U. S. Treasury, after which they rose rapidly in market price and during most of this year have been selling above par. Not only were the financial giants given good bonds for their worthless mortgages, but they can sell these bonds at a profit and reinvest the proceeds in good mortgages, which is just what they are doing. During the first twenty weeks of 1935 life-insurance companies invested nearly four times as much in urban mortgages as they did during the first twenty weeks in 1934.

In dealing with old couples who have invested their life savings in a mortgage, Uncle Sam plays the hard-boiled business man. But in dealing with banks and insurance companies he acts the generous donor "encouraging private initiative." While from 20 to 25 percent of urban home mortgages are still held by individuals, financial institutions comprised 90 percent of the mortgagees receiving H.O.L.C. funds.

As long as the bankers did not know which mortgages would be bailed out by the government, they found it wise to permit some delinquent borrowers to keep their homes. The result was that foreclosures declined slightly late in 1933 and early in 1934 and Uncle Sam strutted the boards as the great home saver. But late in 1934 H.O.L.C. lending operations tapered off (in recent months they have been negligible) and for every mortgage taken off their hands, the bankers found themselves left with five or six on which the government could not help them. Real estate values and rents were beginning to rise. The bankers were now ready to help themselves and they did so by cracking down on the mortgages they still held.

At the end of this first four months of 1935 the myth of the big-hearted landlord was exposed. Foreclosures for 1935 have so far passed the 1933 peak and are rapidly increasing. Banks and insurance companies, enriched by two

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and one-half billion H.O.L.C. dollars, will not further enrich themselves at the expense of mortgaged home owners.

So far we have seen Uncle Sam, the loan shark, playing the role of hero to the banks and insurance companies, while concealing his villainous intentions from farmers and small home owners. But it is no surprise to discover that he has not done right by our Nell. The H.O.L.C., while pretending to save the old homestead, has merely burdened the small home-owner with additional debts. The interest rate on the old mortgage is reduced a trifling amount. The H.O.L.C. rate is 5 percent, as against 6 to 8 percent on the old mortgages. But discounts, fees and all the other added charges which were put into the face amounts of the old mortgages are carried over. The H.O.L.C. adds a new crop of its own and then throws in all overdue taxes, insurance premiums and other debts of the borrower as part of the H.O.L.C. loan. Thus in Cleveland, while the average mortgage debt outstanding January 1, 1934, on all mortgaged owner-occupied properties was $3,794, the average H.O.L.C. loan outstanding was $3,985, in spite of the fact that H.O.L.C. loans were, in most cases, made on the smaller homes (Financial Survey of Urban Housing).*

On a $4,000 loan—about the average for Cleveland—the monthly amortization payment to the H.O.L.C. is $31.64 or about $380 a year. A home owner with an income of $1,000—and in Cleveland more than half of all home owners have incomes of less than $1,000—would have to pay the government 38 percent of his income for fifteen years to wipe out the debt which Uncle Sam so generously bestowed on him.

At the end of April, 1935, delinquencies on principal repayments amounted to $24,000,000 of which nearly $12,000,000 was more than 90 days delinquent, compared with $30,000,000 total principal repayments actually received from the beginning of H.O.L.C. operations. Interest delinquencies amounted to $30,000,000, the equivalent of more than three months interest on all outstanding loans, with most of the loans only from six to nine months old at that time.

Officials claimed that delinquencies were so great because for from six to twelve months the various regions didn't even get around to sending out bills. This pleasing theory has been exploded —since the bureaucrats have caught up on their billings, delinquencies have steadily increased. Repayments on principal declined from $7,300,000 in April to $5,300,000 in May—a little matter of two million dollars that cannot be blamed on a bill clerk, but must be accounted for by the increasing impoverishment of even "conservative" workers. The situation will be worse after June, 1936, when the loans on a "moratorium" basis will be billed for double their present monthly installments.

We come now to the final unmasking of Uncle Sam, landlord to the nation. Will Uncle Sam save the old home and tear up the mortgage? Or will he merely doff his grin and foreclose? There are many indications that the new landlord is a dyed-in-the-wool loan shark and that no mercy will be shown. The quotation from the H.O.L.C. press release, already quoted, shows that 568 foreclosures have been instituted and indicates the accelerating pace at which foreclosure activities are being carried on. The same release admits that of the 568, only 165 were against borrowers able but unwilling to pay. The collection machinery is getting under way, billing is finally being brought up to date and a recent administrative order requires that a Delinquent Accounts Department be set up in each district within a state. At present there is only one in each region comprising several States.

With rising rents and real estate values, H.O.L.C. can follow the example set by banks and insurance companies. Uncle Sam can foreclose on the small home owner; profitably resell the property, or rent it. But he cannot rent it to the foreclosed borrower, because the government must rent at the market level, as described in a very businesslike manner in the H.O.L.C. instructions to the Property Management Department. With the rapid rise in rents, the now homeless borrower will no more be able to pay the rent than he was able to pay installments on his mortgage.

Nevertheless, there is still one hope of saving the home. This hope rests with the home owners themselves. Militant organization of small home owners against foreclosure and evictions can defeat even so powerful a landlord as Uncle Sam. The long time effectiveness of such action on the part of farmers is shown by a comparison of foreclosure figures for North and South Dakota. North Dakota farmers put their faith in militant action and penny sales. Their foreclosures have declined from 1,540 for 1932 to 728 for 1933 and 314 for 1934. South Dakota farmers listened to blandishments of government agents. Their foreclosures show 1,672 for 1932, 1,723 for 1933, 1,321 for 1934. Widespread organization can prevent wholesale foreclosure by the H.O.L.C., force the cancellation of H.O.L.C. debts and weaken the foreclosure drive of the banks and building and loan associations.

* Foreclosures in 983 Identical Communities, covering 52 percent of the U. S. Population

Year	*Annual totals*	*First four months only*
1926	63,812	19,461
1932	206,164	63,039
1933	205,450	67,512
1934	189,393	60,948
1935	———	67,593

The State of The Nation

BECAUSE you read in the social columns that fashionable families at Newport, Bar Harbor and other smart resorts are planning brilliant dinners for fashionable guests and sumptuous coming out parties for debutantes, do not think that American aristocrats are forgetting the dangers that threaten the country from Communistic sources.

Being descended from Colonial clans that fought in the early Indian wars, established the nation after George Washington defeated the British at Yorktown and built up the Republic, real society is quietly evolving a plan to strengthen the citadel of fashion against the invasion of people possessing socialistic ideas.

The Society of Colonial Wars started the nation-wide campaign when Chauncey Ryder McPherson, one of the State Governors, was made head of a committee to enlist the aid of the Colonial Dames, Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Cincinnati, Sons of the Revolution, the St. Nicholas Society, Colonial Lords of Manors and other patriotic organizations. The St. Nicholas Club joined in the campaign several months ago.

America's real society, the descendants of the founders of the nation, are working quietly and effectively toward a return to the healthful politician ideas of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and Marshall. You may read of brilliant gatherings at Newport and Bar Harbor. But who sponsored gayer and more fashionable assemblages than Washington and his compatriots?—*Barclay Beekman in Hearst's Daily Mirror.*

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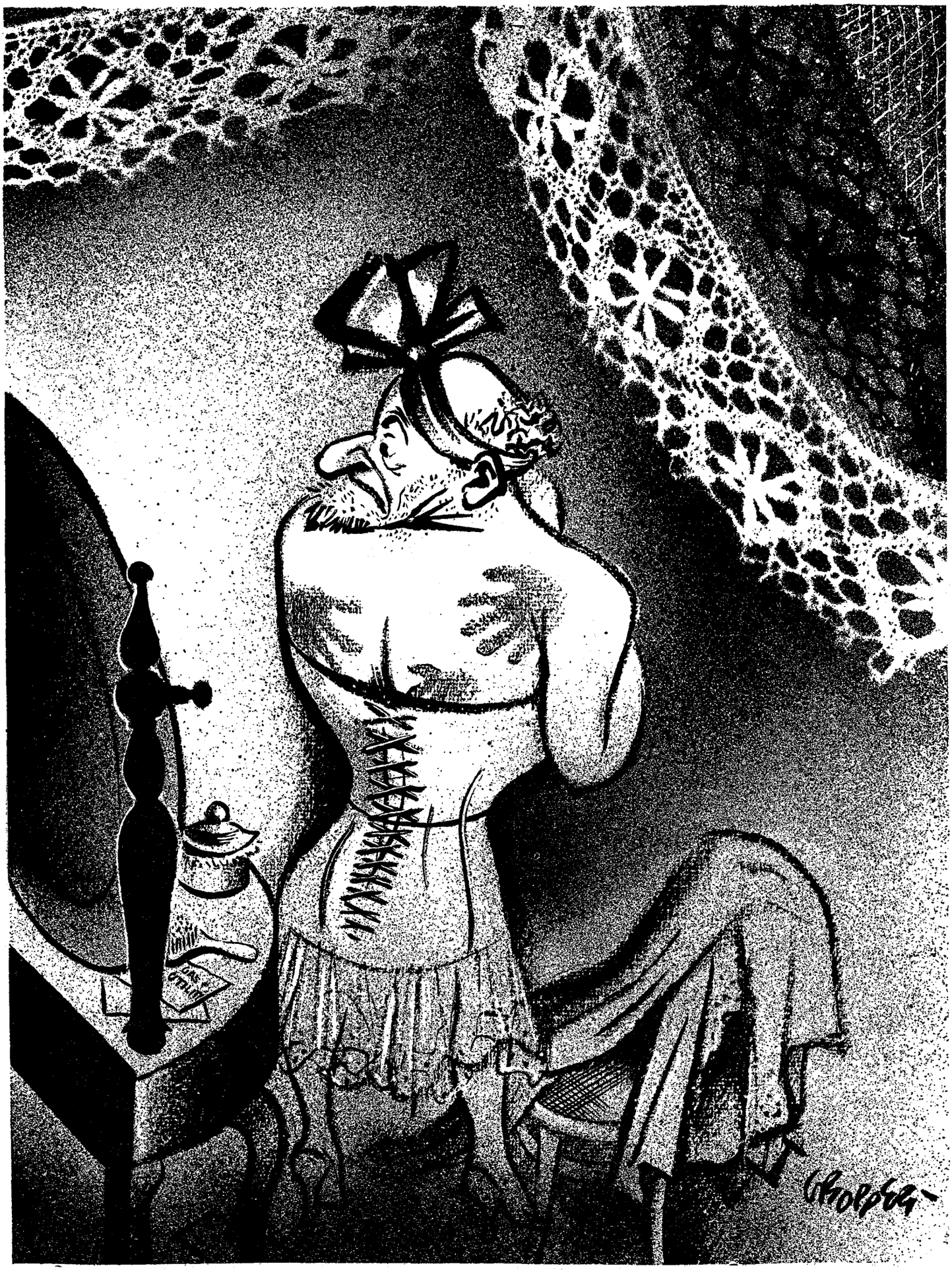

THE SENATE INVESTIGATES ITSELF

William Gropper

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The Writers Meet in Paris

MICHAEL GOLD

PARIS, July 4.

THE streets of Paris were covered with flaming political posters. Every wall had scrawled on it, in chalk, such political hymns of love and hate as, "Death to the Soviets!" and "Long Live the United Front."

Every day the papers reported a new aggression by the armed fascists and a new victory by the United Front that opposed them.

De La Roque, the fascist leader, made a boastful speech, in which he told an enormous meeting of his followers to "Prepare! Be ready! Tomorrow or the day after I will call on you to take power!"

In the fascist papers gun makers openly and shrewdly advertised their wares and offered special discounts to members of the mercenary bands.

It was known that De La Roque was receiving heavy subsidies from the Metal Trust of France. At one of his demonstrations a hundred aeroplanes were brazenly mobilized. It was known that he had intimate political affiliations with the Ministry of Air, besides having allies among the generals, the industrialists and bankers.

All the Hitler tactics had been slavishly copied; windy, I-Am speeches by the "Leader"; mystic rhetoric and pseudo-indignant attacks on the democracy and its corruptions; military discipline among the bands, to the accompaniment of revolutionary promises of glory and personal gain; and, not least of all, attacks on foreigners and open raids into workers' districts.

Several workers had already been murdered by the fascists. The police did nothing. When the fascists were in danger the police protected them; but it did little else. Workers discovered a truckload of revolvers and knives parked in readiness near a fascist meeting; they turned it over to the cops; and the cops shrugged their shoulders and undoubtedly sent the arms back to their owners.

It was like Hitler in Germany—except for the one immortal difference.

The working-class and the middle-class republicans had formed a united front.

When the fascists threatened to visit a workers' town, all the church bells were rung, the fire engines rushed through the streets, the Mayor put on his sash and thousands of miners and textile workers and tradesmen answered the summons of bells and sirens and gathered in the public square—

Waiting grimly for the fascists to come.

But *they* dared not come.

This was happening day after day, in one place after another.

And in the last elections, the United Front had registered a wonderful victory all over France.

The reactionaries sneered at this united front, intrigued against it, tried to set Communist against Socialist and both against the bourgeois democrats like ex-Premier Daladier.

But nothing availed; everyone in France now knows that only the United Front can save France from being Hitlerized. And people say the fascists plan a *putsch* in the fall, "when their bourgeois vacations are over," but there will be a civil war to answer them.

THIS is the atmosphere in which the Writers' Congress is held and this is what gives each word spoken at the Congress the historic gravity and importance of words on a barricade.

André Gide presides with André Malraux over the opening session of the Congress. With them at the long table of the presidium sits a galaxy of distinguished authors that any American publisher would give his eye teeth to have in his catalogue (that is, if the bankers have left him a solitary molar):

Martin Anderson-Nexo, proletarian giant of Scandinavia, author of those immortal working-class epics, *Pelle the Conqueror* and *Ditte;* Anderson-Nexo, the man, who with Romain Rolland, was the mightiest influence on my own generation of revolutionary writers in England and America, gray, ruddy, benevolent and powerful as an old master-mason who still leads the young men at their trade, a figure out of our own Walt Whitman—

Heinrich Mann, voice of the Republican middle class of Germany, one of Hitler's enemies in exile, shy, serious and burdened with the conscience of all humanity, a conscience too pure to compromise with fascism, his novels coming out of the profound soil of European culture—

Alexei Tolstoy and Michael Koltzov, two of the Soviet writers who are leading humanity into a new world—

Aldous Huxley, author of *Point Counter Point,* and E. M. Forster, who wrote the sensitive *Passage to India,* spokesmen of the middle-class liberal England that still holds to democracy—

Jean Richard Bloch (*The Kurdish Night* and *And Company*)—

Lion Feuchtwanger (*Jew Suss and Power*)—

Henri Barbusse (*Under Fire*)—

Ilya Ehrenbourg *(Out of Chaos)*—

Waldo Frank, president of our own League of American Writers—

And André Gide rings the bell that is at the hand of the presiding officer of every European mass-meeting and declares the Congress open.

ANDRE GIDE is one of the dominant figures at the Congress. He is already one of the classics of modern French literature; a man whose name is linked in the anthologies with those of Marcel Proust, Anatole France, Romain Rolland. He is past sixty and his life has been a long and stern philosophic adventure that several generations have attended with painful interest.

For in him was incarnated the conscience of modern Protestant liberalism. He was the heir of the Renaissance and the French Revolution striving to bring order into all the contradictions he had inherited. Every book by Gide was another research in ethics and in the struggle between the honest mind and the moralities of capitalism.

Step by step, this thinker had hewed his path through the confusing jungle of contemporary thought, to a clearing where a new sun was shining. In defending internationalism against the Nazi chauvinists, he said:

> For my part, I claim to be strongly internationalist while remaining intensely French. In like manner, I am a fervent individualist, though I am in full agreement with the Communist outlook, and am actually helped in my individualism by Communism. I have always contended that the individual can best serve the community by being most effectively himself. To this may be added today as corollary, the contention that individuals and their peculiarities can best flourish in a Communist society; or that, as Malramy writes in a recent preface that has already become famous, "Communism restores fertility to the individual."

Do not think, however, this was a congress of writers in defense of Communism.

It was a congress built on the united front; it was a congress possible only because there is a raw, grinning young sadist in Nazi uniform, who shrieks with cannibal joy at the bonfire he has made of the modern books.

There were Socialists, Communists, Protestants, Zionists, liberals and democrats at this Congress. There were "skeptics" like Aldous Huxley, "Olympians" like Julien Benda and Catholics like Lenormand.

There were enemies of Communism like the Italian professor, Salvemini and the Trotzkyite, Magadalene Paz.

No censorship was exercised over their speeches, even when the Trotzkyite lady, in typical fashion, created the only disruptive attempt at the Congress. To a noisy claque that came in with her, this fat, flabby fool with the marcelled hair delivered a slanderous speech full of the usual clichés against the Soviet Union, because a Trotzkyite named Victor Serge was in prison there.

To her mind, and those who applauded

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her, this Congress was a "fraud" unless it went on record equally against fascism and the Soviet Union. These people can see no difference between a Nazi concentration camp and a Soviet collective farm. They were invited to a United Front Congress dedicated to literature; but their idea of literature and a United Front was to create a shrieking scandal and to charge all of us with being "tools of Stalin."

Such are the little Trotzkyites everywhere, pathologues living in a self-centered world and helpful only to the enemy.

IT WAS noteworthy that their little raid had not even the effect of a mosquito's sting. The Congress moved on its serious way; a laboratory where the writers of Europe met for the first time to orientate themselves in a new world.

It would be impossible even to suggest the speeches and discussions; if printed in full, they would make a volume of several thousand pages.

It can be said that such a volume, in abridged form, will be printed and it will be an historic document of our time. For these writers were too serious for bombast or rhetoric; they came, many of them, in a state of alarm. Their world was threatened with destruction, as in Germany, and they knew they must examine this world and their own ideas, to weed out all that was false and vulnerable, so as to preserve what was worthy of one's sacrifice.

From Germany, Italy, Spain, France, England, China, Australia, Greece, South America, the United States, they came with their reports of conditions strangely similar; of the closing of schools and a tightening censorship and an increasing vulgarization of culture as capitalism sank into decline.

E. M. Forster, a sympathetic figure breathing a rare kindliness and humanity, described the appearance of a new trend in his England, that he wittily named, "Fabian fascism."

Others had a bloodier tale to tell. It was not with books, but with guns and blackjacks, that the fascists were uprooting the grand traditions of the Renaissance.

Therefore, what was free speech? Where was its limit in a world of revolution and counter-revolution? Were the Nazis right in saying that no national culture must learn from another? What was true nationalism in culture? Was Milton wrong in having spent his studious youth in Italy and borrowing from its culture? Were Carlyle and Emerson traitors to their countries for having read Goethe and Hegel?

What was individualism? Was not the individual thinker above all the political battles? Fascism, said he, was not; it "co-ordinated" him. But did not Communism do the same? If it didn't what then precisely did it do, asked Julien Benda, to whom Communism and Humanism seemed enemies. Paul Nizan made a classic and eloquent answer.

John Strachey pointed out the reason why fascism threatened culture; "the capitalist system no longer makes sense, hence it is the enemy of all rational thought."

"Tradition is not something fixed for all time; it is a perpetual flow of invention," said Jean Cassou. "Fascism is akin to the academic spirit in so far as its interests lie in fixing cultural tradition."

Here are the words of the mystic Zionist author, Max Brod:

> As for me, I remain in my original thought: The Dream belongs to the Individual and his profound soul: Reason, clear, luminous and without myths, belongs to society.
>
> These two factors should not destroy each other, but on the contrary, should be bound together by the most enigmatic word in the language . . . by this supreme and magic word . . . by this simple word, "AND!"
>
> Dream *and* reason; night *and* day, profound belief in God *and* colloboration, rational and active, with the Soviet Five-Year Plan.
>
> Perhaps the romantic Heine, who threw off the cowl, could tell us how to realize the supreme union of these contradictions, not easily, indeed, but after great internal struggle.

I walked about the streets and was shown the little alley near Notre Dame where Francois Villon brawled over his wine. Across the way was the cellar-oubliette where he lay in darkness for his sins. Here was another street; it is sacred to us, for the men and women of the Commune fought here behind their last desperate barricade.

This is the house of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the great Negro Liberator; this the square where Robespierre was guillotined. Here is where the fascists, only last February, made their attempt at a *putsch* that would establish a new inquisition. Here is Pasteur's house and there the crumbling foundations of the Bastille; and this is the House of Workers' Culture, an old, old Parisian house, filled with a new meaning.

Paris, for centuries has been a word that has stirred humanity, like the word, Moscow, today.

The Writers' Congress in Defense of Culture held its sessions in the biggest hall owned by the city, Maison de la Mutualité. Every night from two to five thousand intellectuals and workers paid their way into the meetings. They listened intently, they cheered, applauded, made notes. Our Hemingways have reported to us only the cheap and nasty tourist side of Paris; but here was the heart of it, the Paris of revolution and thought, the Paris of Diderot and Vaillant-Couturier.

MUCH discussion and many papers were read around the question of nationalism. The fascists have made the national tradition of each country their chief point of demagogy. As in America, where Daniel Boone and the tradition of landless, hungry pioneers is used by capitalists and their intellectual valets as a club against the hungry proletariat of today.

We have learned in America, how to answer these parasites. We are beginning to unmask their false claims and to reconquer the revolutionary traditions of our land.

At the Writers' Congress, it was of absorbing interest to find men from many lands wrestling with the same problem. They were discovering that the history of the folk is the true tradition of the nation. One hated one's country's exploiters, but one loved one's country and its people. It was precisely because one loved them that one hated and fought the oppressors; this was the true nationalism.

And internationalism meant an alliance with the struggling peoples of other nations, a source of strength, both in culture and freedom. Writers of Germany, France, America and England joined in this common thesis.

THE French writers, even those who correspond to our liberals, gave one the impression of men who may soon be called upon to fight for their lives and who made themselves ready.

Here were the German writers to greet them, a delegation of those whom Hitler could not kill: such figures as Bert Brecht, Erich Weinert, the people's poet (he will soon be with us in America), Anna Seghers, Johannes Becher, Egon Erwin Kisch, Klaus Mann, Ernst Toller, Alfred Doblinn, Alfred Kerr and others.

And here were the Soviet writers: Boris Pasternak, Vesevlod Ivanov (*Armored Train*); Isaac Babel (*Red Cavalry*); Lahuti, the great poet-laureate of the Soviet East; Panferov, Tolstoi, Koltzov, Luppol, Tikhonov, Mikitenko and others.

In this laboratory of writers, in this congress, the authors of Germany, France and the Soviet Union discovered a common cultural tradition that they would defend against fascism. The Soviets were building a new world; but as Luppol of Moscow stated in his thesis: "The proletariat is the heir of all the culture which the decline of the bourgeois regime is threatening. It makes common cause with the liberal humanists if the latter consent to revise their all-too-vague notions of humanism."

And the French writers were revising their notions rapidly, under the shadow of a fascist return to barbarism like that which drove their German brothers into prison or exile. The fight was the same in both lands.

It is true that a few French authors had been poisoned by Trotzkyism, so flattering to the egotist author. Did not one of the former surrealistes, Paul Eluard, rise at this Congress to say that he opposed the Franco-Soviet pact and all cultural traffic between the two lands? (All on the lofty plane of super-leftist-Trotzkyite-super-revolutionism, of course.) But other former surrealistes answered him. Among them Louis Aragon, one of the half-dozen great poets in the world today and one of the organizers of the Congress; Tristan Tzara, the father of Dada also answered Eluard, when he confessed, "Formerly, I believed that salvation lay through literature and the written

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word; now I know that only social forces such as that released by the Soviets can give us the palaces of a new and beautiful life."

ONE must thank the French authors who arranged this Congress. It was conceived in a broad and generous spirit and was executed with skill. Painful drudgery goes on behind the scenes before such a congress is born. This "dirty work" was done by authors like Andre Gide, Andre Malraux, Louis Aragon, Henri Barbusse, Jean Richard Bloch and others. They were not too proud or literary to be organizers for an idea.

Writers under capitalism have become effete. They have sheltered their comfort in the famous ivory tower which to my eyes always resembled the boudoir of a spoiled chorus blonde whom a millionaire was keeping. Or with the best of the writers, individualism was often a monk's cell, where in melancholy self-abuse they wasted their manhood on the follies of metaphysics.

Fascism wakes them from their vanity and dreaming. It is a glorious thing to see writers accepting the challenge and taking their place among the leaders of humanity. Writers are, as Stalin said in his oft-quoted speech, "the engineers of the human soul."

The Writers' Congress at Paris was the birthplace of an international of such writers as have determined not to surrender the human soul to the barbarian hosts of fascism. The Congress, said Heinrich Mann, was "an important event in his life." Many other writers said the same; writers are like other men and in solidarity they find courage for the battle.

The Crisis in the Socialist Party

LOREN MILLER

AFTER a year of bitter internal conflict that began with the adoption of the Declaration of Principles at the Detroit convention in 1934, a semblance of harmony has been restored in the ranks of the Socialist Party. The conflict proved costly; membership declined by twenty-five percent, from 23,600 to 17,743. One state party resigned, another was suspended. At times, a split seemed imminent as factional organs hurled charges and counter-charges of bad faith at opposing leaders. Norman Thomas wrote that he was unable to collect money for his party because of the "general belief that we are dead or dying." In the midst of this confusion the united front, so often proposed by the Communist Party and one of the real causes of internal dissension, was shelved until the 1936 convention. A treaty of peace designed to settle questions at issue was concluded last week at a meeting of the party's national executive committee. The peace pact is only a stop-gap and because it leaves major issues unsettled must lead to more difficulties.

In reality the pact leaves control of the party in the hands of the so-called Old Guard faction, bitter-end enemies of the united front. This is the more remarkable because it was this faction that was ostensibly defeated at Detroit and also lost the battle to defeat the Declaration of Principles in a party referendum. Although he voted for the recent compromise its success marked the defeat in a real sense of Norman Thomas, and it is rumored that he will be replaced as a presidential candidate in 1936 by Daniel Hoan, Milwaukee mayor who emerged at the committee meeting as the peacemaker.

The Detroit Declaration of Principles was adopted in response to a widespread demand from Socialist Party members for a more militant organization and for clarification of the party's stand on the questions of war, fascism and the road to power. After the split in 1919, out of which the American Communist Party emerged, control of the Socialist Party fell more and more into the hands of a group of New Yorkers led by Morris Hillquit. Hillquit, who was the brains of the group, died in 1932 and since that time Algernon Lee, James Oneal and Louis Waldman have been rattling around in his shoes, obviously much too large for them. Lee is head of the Rand School, Oneal edits The New Leader and Waldman, an attorney, is chairman of the New York executive committee of the party. Under the leadership of these men, who have the backing of Abraham Cahan and B. C. Vladeck, editors of the powerful Socialist Jewish Daily Forward, the Socialist Party became a thoroughly social-democratic organization. It formed ties with powerful American Federation of Labor leaders particularly in the needle trades. Hostility to the Soviet Union was open. Gradual reforms were looked to as a means of attaining the socialist state and all revolutionary philosophy was rejected. The very mention of united front with the Communist Party was anathema.

A vague opposition to the New York Old Guard had been growing since an attempt to unseat Hillquit as chairman of the national executive committee in 1932. The opposition was both a manifestation of an increased desire for militancy and of sectional jealousy. Thomas, who had been the presidential candidate in 1928 and 1932, gradually became the leader of the movement and those who formed it came to be styled the Militants. The Militants, as their name suggests, voiced a desire for a change in party policy but they have never formally formulated a program. Certainly, they are not opposed to the Soviet Union in the same sense as the Old Guard. They are timorously critical of the old A. F. of L. leadership and even favor the united front with the Communist Party on specific issues such as the Herndon case. Their outlook on war is colored by the pacifism of Thomas and Devere Allen and they are ready for cautious departures on the question of parliamentarianism. Trailing along behind the Militants in opposition to the Old Guard is the group of municipal Socialists led by Hoan and Darlington Hoopes of the Pennsylvania legislature, men who resent the leadership of a group of New York politicians who are not even able to win an election.

As the time for the 1934 convention approached another group arose within the Socialist Party: the Revolutionary Policy Committee, among whose leaders were J. B. Matthews, Ruth Shallcross, George Streator, Irving Brown and Howard Kester. The Revolutionary Policy Committee proposed "revolutionary socialism" and demanded that the party throw overboard its old reformist policies. They demanded that it come out for the united front with the Communist Party and that it avow friendship for the Soviet Union. Parliamentarianism was attacked and a program of revolutionary action was outlined.

For a time it seemed that party unity would be destroyed at the Detroit convention. Old Guard leaders wanted to stick to the platform of 1932, the opposition demanded a new outline of principles. Norman Thomas, as befitted the leader of the center faction, played the role of peacemaker. The Declaration of Principles, reputedly written by Devere Allen during early morning hours, emerged. The controversial questions of war, fascism and seizure of power are dealt with in the following excerpt:

> They (the Socialists) will loyally support, in the tragic event of war, any of their comrades who for anti-war activities or refusal to perform war services come into conflict with public opinion or the law. . . . They will meet war and the detailed plans for war . . . by massed war resistance. . . . It (the Socialist Party) unhesitatingly applies itself to the task of replacing the bogus democracy of capitalist parliamentarianism by a genuine workers' democracy. . . . If the capitalist system should collapse in a general chaos and confusion which cannot permit of orderly procedure, the Socialist Party, whether or not in such a case it is a majority, will not shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining a government under workers' rule.

LOUIS WALDMAN, spokesman for the Old Guard, cried out that the Declaration was "anarchistic, illegal and Communis-

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tic." Nobody was satisfied. The Militants were determined to preserve party unity and gave the document their support. The Revolutionary Policy Committee issued a statement criticising the Declaration but advised members to support it. But the compromise settled nothing. Even while it was being adopted Joseph Sharts, Ohio leader, arose to brand it a piece of "Red internationalism" and announced that he was leaving the party. John C. Packard, California conservative defeated for a place on the executive committee, hurried back home to aid Upton Sinclair. The Oregon party withdrew, its leaders explaining that subscription to the Declaration might subject them to prosecution under the state's criminal syndicalism law! Indiana leaders tried to take a referendum on adherence and got themselves and their party suspended for their trouble.

Not only did the Militants win the battle for the adoption of the Declaration but they won a majority of places on the national executive committee. But control of the New York state party machine remained in the Old Guard and using that as a base its leaders set out to undo what had been done at Detroit.

Applicants for membership in the New York local were refused if they were thought hostile to Old Guard leadership. The constitution of the New Leader Publishing Association was changed to make membership in the Socialist Party no longer a requisite for membership in the group that was publishing an accredited party newspaper! A quarrel developed between the Old Guard and the Young People's Socialist League and the young Socialists were ousted from their headquarters; a dual organization was set up to replace them. Five members of the Buffalo local were suspended for "advocacy of armed insurrection." Attacks on the united front grew in bitterness; the successful French pact was ridiculed and the pleas of the American Communist Party were poohpoohed as plots to split the party. When Thomas suggested a united front he was "exposed" as an agent of Moscow. Assaults on the Soviet Union became common in The New Leader and Harry Lang of The Daily Forward staff sold his horror stories to Hearst. The New Leader took the lead in a crusade against the Militants and the national executive committee.

The quarrel grew in bitterness. The Militants have finally established an organ of their own, The Socialist Call, which announced that it was to be the "organ of revolutionary Socialism." Norman Thomas transferred his column to it after a series of disagreements and attacks on him in The New Leader. The founding of The Call added fuel to the fire. The Old Guard demanded its suppression as a "factional organ" and in turn the new paper demanded that it be made an accredited party organ. Meanwhile the Revolutionary Policy Committee had reorganized as the Revolutionary Policy Publishing Association and was publishing its own organ, The Revolutionary Socialist Review. State Socialist Party organizations have a great deal of autonomy and New Jersey became the stronghold of the Militants and as vigorous in barring Old Guard followers from membership as the New York organization was in closing its rolls to Militants.

The Old Guard program centered around practical refusal to accept the Detroit Declaration. Time and again followers of the Militants were branded Communists and were accused of being "insurrectionists." As for the united front the New York committee virtually demanded that the Socialist Party refuse to consider any proposals from the Communists. "The future of the party is not with alliances with Communist elements but in the development of closer ties with the labor movement," read a statement issued at an Old Guard meeting in June.

Party conflicts came to a head last winter when the New Jersey, Michigan and Massachusetts party organizations demanded that the New York group be expelled. The national executive committee met in Buffalo in March to consider the demand. New York refused to admit the legality of the order issued to show cause and sent Algernon Lee and Julius Gerber to the meeting only as "official observers." After the Militants had presented the case the Old Guard refused to answer. Confronted with this defiance the executive committee backed down and contented itself with naming a committee to seek a basis for peace in the name of party unity. The committee drew up a nine-point program and gave New York six weeks to answer. The answer was a point blank refusal to compromise. Then another committee was named to go to New York City and take testimony from both the Militant and the Old Guard factions. When the committee arrived in New York in June the Old Guard simply ignored it and the committee had to be content with hearing the already well-known Militant complaints.

The impotence of the Militant controlled executive committee in the face of defiance of its rulings rested on the fear that if forthright measures were taken the Old Guard would split the party. The New Leader warned that the split "would spread across the continent and leave in its wake the wreckage of a party." There was another consideration. Alfred Baker Lewis of Massachusetts admitted that "it is true that the so-called Old Guard have the inside track with the unions in the clothing trade and some other unions in New York and with the unions in the clothing trades throughout most of the larger cities."

THESE very practical considerations account for only part of the Militants' hesitation. Their lack of a positive program played a role. After all, the Militant bloc was loose and without a definite philosophy to hold it together. Hoan, leader of the municipal Socialists on the executive committee, had few differences with the Old Guard. Thomas could not bring himself to espouse the united front and other measures which would have made his leadership a matter of principle and his fight against the Old Guard remained largely a personal feud. The Revolutionary Policy Publishing Association occupied itself too little with gaining a foothold among party members. Theoretically sound statements based on defense of the Soviet Union, favoring the united front and attacking parliamentarianism were not followed by concrete steps to popularize a program that had an appeal to many party members. There were generals and there was an army but the generals didn't get in touch with the rank and file.

Every advantage lay with the Old Guard's clever politicians. Oneal and Waldman played the role of the injured innocents striving to preserve party unity against executive committee attacks. Lack of a Militant program played into their hands and they were able to make the whole struggle appear as a mere contest over party leadership whereas it was in essence a battle to decide what direction the Socialist Party was to take. Victory for the Old Guard meant postponement of the united front and the commitment of the party to its old reformist program despite the Detroit Declaration.

The July meeting of the national executive committee was preceded by a closed caucus of New York Militants. Norman Thomas spoke and stressed the point that only the expulsion of the Old Guard could bring real harmony to the party. He was certain of that.

But if rank-and-file Militants expected Thomas to press the point for expulsion they were soon disillusioned. At its first session the committee named a sub-committee to find a basis for party unity. It submitted an eight-point report which did not recommend expulsion. Thomas voted for the report. He said afterward that he wasn't sure that a "political party can be run on the basis of pure justice" anyhow.

The report was adopted by seven to four votes on almost every point. The most important point makes believers in "Communism" ineligible for Socialist Party membership. Communism is defined as advocacy of "violent insurrection," belief in "dictatorship or abandonment of democracy either as a fact within the party or as an ideal method of achieving Socialism" and the "use of deceitful, disruptive or underground tactics even as a means to a worthy end." Other points require the New York organization to dissolve the dual Young Socialists' organization and re-admit the Young People's Socialist League. Members of the Young People's Socialist League are to be admitted to the party when they reach eighteen; the New York crowd had imposed an arbitrary age limit of twenty-one in the face of the national constitution. Attacks on party members are forbidden and The New Leader was asked to restore its former constitution. If the latter requirement is met in good faith there is the suggestion that The Socialist

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Call be discontinued. There will be no more accredited party organs.

IT IS obvious that the peace treaty does settle questions of legal interpretation, some of them against the wishes of the Old Guard. But those are minor points. Even if young Socialists have the right to enter the party at a certain age the question of their beliefs may be used to exclude them. The abolition of the accredited list for newspapers leaves the field wide open for a continuance of a factional press. The real victory of the Old Guard lies in the section on the definition of "Communism." Plainly that section must close the doors of party membership to those who follow the so-called revolutionary Socialist group. Whenever the Old Guard feels strong enough it can launch a Red hunt against all of its opponents of the left and even Thomas has been called a "Communist" by The New Leader. The definition may become elastic enough to bar all but Social Democrats.

It is difficult to tell how long this inconclusive peace treaty will preserve party harmony. The Old Guard leaders are enthusiastic in their approval. The Militants, as represented by The Socialist Call, are disappointed but evidently not disposed to attack the pact as yet. Members of the Revolutionary Socialist group are preparing to conduct a fight against the treaty and are hopeful that they will gain support from Militant followers tired of compromise.

Inasmuch as Hoan has forced the New York Old Guard to accept his leadership he has won his sectional battle; there are persistent reports that he led the fight for compromise after being assured of support for the 1936 presidential nomination. Thomas will retain some of his personal popularity despite his inability to live up to his militant statements but real leadership of the opposition to the Old Guard has passed to a group consisting of Powers Hapgood, Maynard Kreuger and Franz Daniel, the three most persistent opponents of the peace pact in the national executive committee. Daniel is popularly regarded as the most decisive of the three but even he cast his vote to endorse the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill because he was afraid of offending the labor unions. Kreuger alone opposed the bill.

It is no secret that Old Guard leaders favor a labor party of the "right kind," one that will bar Communists from membership. They are also on record as demanding that the Socialist Party "shall announce in unequivocal language that it will neither consider nor discuss any proposals that may come from Communists for a united front for any purpose." Their program is clear enough. If the Socialist Party is to play its part in furthering much-needed united action on the part of the American workers opponents of the Old Guard will have to make an active fight for a program to defeat these reactionary efforts to stifle a militancy growing in the party for the past few years.

A Dialogue on the Piazza

ALFRED HAYES

A: What will we do?
B: What will we do when it comes?
A: Yes, what will we do?
B: They'll be mad
They'll be fierce
They'll shoot the police
A: And what will we do without the police?
Who'll guard our homes?
Who'll shield our lives?
B: They'll have guns
And bombs
And knives
A: And KNIVES!
B: Can you shoot a gun?
A: I never held a gun
I wouldn't know how to handle one
I've always depended upon the police
B: They'll raid the banks
They'll hold up the tellers with machine guns and tanks
They'll take our money
A: O dear, our money
B: Then what will we do?
A: Perhaps we should ship it
Do you think it will be safe
In Switzerland or Asia?
B: How will we eat?
Where will we sleep?
A: We'll starve to death
We'll die in the street
B: How can we live without any money?
A: How can we live without servants and cooks?
Without policemen to guard us
And private detectives
Without butlers and valets
O God, who will protect us from gunmen and crooks?
B: What will we do?
I've never worked
I don't know a thing
I've got a fair voice
Do you think they will need a chap who can sing?
A tenor, or a ballroom dancer?
A: I don't know the answer
B: What will we do?
A: Do you think they'll eat us
Like a cannibal isle?
Will they be nice to me
If I smile?
If I show my teeth
In a pretty grin
Will they tip their hats
And let me in?
B: I'll teach them manners
I'll teach them Greek
How to manicure their nails
How to speak
A: And I'll smile
B: And I'll swagger
A: I'll be sweet
B: And I'll bow
A: But our life
B: Our life
A & B: Won't be as easy and as comfortable and as charming
As it is now.

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Those They Leave Behind

ANN RIVINGTON

THE strike is won or the strike is lost. The National Guard is called out, or the gun thugs, or the Arbitration Board, as the case may be. The demonstration of unemployed gains its demands or is broken up by the police. Whatever the outcome of the struggles of labor, there are sure to be individuals killed or sent to prison. These may be outstanding leaders and organizers or merely innocent bystanders. They are labor's dead and labor's political prisoners, the scapegoats of profit and big business.

What becomes of the unfortunate families of such men and women? These stories hardly ever reach us in the capitalist press. They seem to concern no one. My search for some definite information about them took me to the office of the International Labor Defense. There, in answer to my questions, I was led to a small filing cabinet in an inner room. "Here," I was told, "you will find them all. We have in this file the cases of some sixty families, including two hundred and fifty children, all over the country. Those are just the families of political prisoners, not counting those who have been killed. And the file gets bigger every month."

I start browsing through the folders. I find clippings from newspapers and magazines, pages of vital statistics, many letters and even photographs. These are no dry case studies I am reading. They are documents of heroism and endurance. The stuff of drama, of poetry is in these pages. The letters are what surprise me the most. They are addressed by prisoners and prisoners' wives to the International Labor Defense, but they are not the kind of letters contained in the files of any social or charitable organization. They are full of intimacy and warmth, the heartfelt outpourings of friend to friend.

I stop to gaze at a picture of a young woman with three little girls gathered around her. The woman's full, warm face is arresting. Clear eyes look out, head is uplifted as if in challenge. The children are wide-eyed, comely little creatures, dressed with painstaking, threadbare neatness. These are Mrs. Lulu Bock and family, of Dry Branch, West Virginia. She is the twenty-five-year-old wife of Charles Bock, who is serving a life sentence in Moundsville Prison. He has been there for three years now. The youngest of the little girls was a baby of only a few months when the young father, prominent in the strike of the West Virginia coal miners, took part in a mass picket line. The pickets were attacked by armed gun thugs. In the melee, one of the thugs was killed. Charles Bock and two other pickets were arrested and charged with the killing. One of the three turned state's evidence with a "confession" the sincerity of which may be measured by the fact that he was released immediately and disappeared from the community. Charles Bock and McSurley, a single man, both have been in Moundsville Prison ever since.

I read through Mrs. Bock's letters. "He was always such a good provider," she writes. And again, "He always brought home candy to the children," and "He was so good to us all." In her every mention of her husband, there is a yearning tenderness which makes it gradually evident that these two, in the face of their hard lot, are still lovers. Then this:

> I was left alone in the world with no help and no one I could really look to. I tried several times to get work and it seemed as though everything blocked me. So one evening, there was a strange letter came to me, and I broke the seal. I was really surprised, for there was a money order in it. I just can't express my thoughts, and from then on I have been receiving this money regular. If it hadn't been for the help I have got from the I.L.D. we surely would have starved. . . . I want to say this much more. Before I ever heard from you people, I had very little hopes of my husband getting out. But I know if you can be so nice as to do so much for me I am in hopes that you can do something to help him to get out of prison and back to his dear little children.

There are no letters from Charles Bock in the file. All are from his wife. She explains this. He is allowed to write only one letter a month. He avails himself of this pitiful and precious privilege to write to his wife. But "he says in every letter I receive how thankful he is for what you people are doing for him and his family."

Another folder in the file interests me because it is so full of letters. I find they are from Viola Cobb, wife of a sharecropper from Tallapoosa, Ala., mother of nine children. Her husband, Ned Cobb, is serving twelve to fifteen years in the Speigner jail.

Ned Cobb was a member of the Sharecroppers' Union. His neighbor and fellow member, Clifford James, was buying a little farm from a rich landowner. In 1932, he was unable to keep up his payments. The landowner promised him more time, but nevertheless the sheriff appeared one day to take James' cow and mule instead of cash. Ned Cobb was with James at the time.

To a Negro sharecropper in the deep south, the loss of cow and mule is the loss of his livelihood. James objected. Ned Cobb sided with him against the sheriff and the animals remained on the farm. "I'm going back and get some more men," said the sheriff, "And I'm coming back and kill you all in a pile."

That evening, a meeting of the union was going on in Clifford James' cabin. Ned Cobb was there. The sheriff returned with a crowd of armed deputies and with no preliminaries they opened fire on the cabin. The sharecroppers defended themselves.

Four deputies were slightly wounded, while one sharecropper was killed and the number wounded was never determined. The sheriff later admitted seeing "four or five dead ones lying around."

Clifford James, seriously injured, made his way under cover of darkness to nearby Tuscogee Institute for medical aid. He was turned over to the officials of the Macon County jail. His wounds were not attended. He was stripped of his clothes and left lying naked on the floor in an unventilated, unlighted cell until he was dead.

A posse hunted the woods and eleven Negro croppers were arrested. Ned Cobb and four others actually were brought to trial for assault with intent to kill and given sentences which the "fair and impartial" Judge William B. Bowling described as "tempering justice with mercy"—sentences of from five to fifteen years. Ned Cobb's is the longest.

But meanwhile, what is happening to Viola Cobb and the nine children? That can be told best by quoting one of her own letters:

> I received your loving letter and also the ten dollars. I was more than glad to get it because we are in a suffering condition. I will tell you a part of our troubles.
>
> My boys and other boys of the families of political prisoners signed up to work on the R.F.C., but they turn them down. Then I signed up an Arlene Ledbetter told me that they was helping widows but they had given orders from Washington, D. C., to not help any of the political prisoners' families. . . .
>
> It gave me more courage to work on since there is so many more white an Negro workers are beginning to understand why they should unite to gather an fight against hunger. . . .
>
> If I could just see you all I could tell you all just how I have prayed for all nations an I want to tell all nations just how the Lord has talk to me just as he talk to Moses at the burning bush an that why I believe that the Lord will roll the waters back so that we can cross this river of trouble. . . . My tongue can not express the love an thanks I have in my heart for you all for the money an clothes an things you all have send to us. . . . May the Lord bless the I.L.D. workers all over the world. This is from the depths of my heart.
>
> Comradely yours,
>
> Viola Cobb.

The files of families dependent in some measure on the Prisoners' Relief of the International Labor Defense contain others besides those of political prisoners. There are also the families of those who have been killed for their labor activities. There are, for example, Mrs. Elizabeth Baldwin of Harlan, Kentucky, and her four children. At the time of the Harlan strike, three years ago, Mrs. Baldwin was only twenty-five years old. Her youngest child was a baby in her arms. She was living,

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then, in the strikers' tent colony. (They had all been evicted, of course, from the company houses.)

In one of her letters, Mrs. Baldwin tells the story of her husband's death.

> My husband was a coal miner and a union man. His activities in union work was the cause of the gun thug, Lee Fleenor, shooting him down in cold blooded murder on the 30th night of August, 1931, in front of the strikers' soup kitchen, leaving me a widow with five small, fatherless children to raise. It is hard upon me to get sufficient support for myself and the children.

For Mrs. Baldwin, the history of the years since the strike has been one of eviction after eviction. Because of the well-known company black list, she has had no chance for either employment or home relief. (The company still owns the town.) The only thing in her life that is certain is the monthly relief check, tiny though it is, from the Prisoners' Relief of the I.L.D. and the occasional package of clothes they are able to send her.

The last case which I examined and one of the most appealing, is that of Mrs. Mamie Williams, another Alabama Negro woman. She is thirty-four years old, the mother of seven children. Her picture shows a serious oval face and large dark eyes. She looks amazingly young.

Mr. Williams has been dead for the past seven or eight years and she has been the sole support of her family ever since. Four and a half years ago, her oldest boy, Eugene, was thirteen years old. "Such a good boy," she says. He was already trying to help support the family, working whenever he could find some little thing to do.

One day, Eugene said to his mother, "There's too many mouths to feed around here." He had been unable to get work for some time. He would travel around and see if he could find something and send back money to his mother. He got himself dressed and took a little bundle.

The next thing Mrs. Williams heard of her son, he was being tried for his life at Scottsboro, along with eight other Negro boys he had never seen before, on a charge of rape. The actual, unspoken charge at that trial, as the world now knows, was that of belonging to a suppressed race which had shown recent signs, in Sharecroppers' Union and organization among the unemployed, of rebelling against its desperate conditions.

The danger that has hung over her son these four and a half years has had a serious effect on Mrs. Williams' health. Frequent illness has made the support of her remaining six children even harder for her. Ophelia, the oldest of these, is now just past thirteen. She is and has been for some time now, the virtual mother of the family. She has taken care of the others whenever her mother was able to go out to work (usually washing the clothes of wealthy white neighbors) and when Mrs. Williams was too ill for that, she has taken care of her as well.

For the labor demonstration on May Day, 1934, the I.L.D. paid Mrs. Williams' carfare to New York. She spoke in Union Square on that day, the first public speech of her life. It was very short.

"When I stay down there in my little shack in Alabama," she said, "without even a grate to cook my food on, when I got food, I cry every day for my boy. I cain't help it cry every day. But now I come to New York an see you all here an know you all are fighting to save my boy an there is millions of you all an you are with me. Now I cain't cry any more as long as I live."

While Mrs. Williams was in New York, Ophelia, as usual, was acting mother to the children. She wrote her mother a letter:

> All the kids are well. Willie didn't get the measles like we thought he would. The relief lady was here, an she didn't want to give us the two dollars for the food on account of you was away. But I hollered right smart an so I got the two dollars anyway.

Sugar Is Not Sweet

HARRY ARCHER

"THE trouble with this Island," the young man said, "is the A.A.A." The young man was a Columbia University-bred son of a sugar-cane planter. "Were it not for the A.A.A. we could sell sugar to New York cheaper than Cuba and we could undersell Louisiana cane and the domestic beet sugar."

We sat in the luxurious Hotel Condado, built for tourists and for prohibition. Tourists seldom came to Porto Rico and prohibition customers went to Havana, to Nassau. Then came the depression.

"Young man," I said, "when will you stop thinking in terms of sugar bags and think in terms of human beings?"

"You talk like a socialist. Which reminds me that they are in power in Porto Rico now and they ain't no different. You know we have an unwritten law here that the Speaker of the House is always the lawyer for the sugar companies and he gets $40,000 a year. Another trouble here and it's worse in the Virgin Islands, is the government. The P.R.E.R.A. (Porto Rican Emergency Relief Administration) here pays the workers a dollar and a quarter a day. They are all living in a fool's paradise, but the day of reckoning is coming. My father used to have the peons working for him at half-a-dollar a day and they were damn glad to get it."

You cannot engage a Porto Rican of the owning class in a conversation for long without hearing about the P.R.E.R.A. That same night a welcome party was being given by the officials of the P.R.E.R.A. to the American head. There had been charges, there had been investigations. The honorable gentleman had gone to Washington and come back exhonorated—hence the party. As a disturbing footnote to the welcome party was the announcement from Washington that the White House had appointed Ernest Gruening to head the rehabilitation plan for Porto Rico. The Condado was ablaze with lights. P.R.E.R.A. officials, Porto Ricans all, came down in new Fords and shining Chevrolets to praise the new American messiah, the director of relief, who gave some peons a dollar and a quarter a day and gave Porto Rican politicians jobs out of the one and one-half millions per month which Uncle Sam is spending on the P.R.E.R.A. The director got into trouble because he failed to appoint a sufficient number of socialists to the P.R.E.R.A. jobs.

I ran into the beaming proprietor, while three consolidated brass bands were grinding out their part of the menu.

"I see that you didn't invite any of the pick-and-shovel boys I saw on the roads in the hills; but maybe you don't allow people without shoes to come to the Condado." That was my parting shot.

On going to bed I remembered that the only well-fed proletarians in Porto Rico were the prisoners. They are the only workers in Porto Rico who have shoes and hats. Recalling something about forced labor I made a mental note that under Uncle Sam's management Porto Rican prisoners are rented out by Porto Rican authorities to anyone wanting to hire them. Comparing them to the rest of the population, I decided that, were I a Porto Rican, I would commit some minor offense every six months for three squares and shoes' sake.

Next day I met the Secretary of Agriculture. The rehabilitation plan, he explained, was merely a Porto Rican edition of a planless society. When the American corporations got hold of nearly 40 percent of the cultivable acreage of Porto Rico they stripped it of all the trees and other vegetation and grew sugar cane. The result was that a country which, because of its favorable climate, could grow fruits and foodstuffs sufficient to support its population, now imports beans from New York, bananas from

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Santo Domingo, eggs from Holland— and political boloney from Washington. The rehabilitation plan, formulated by a professor of the University of Porto Rico, is a kind of combined C.C.C. and P.W.A. Under this alphabetical merger Porto Rico will blossom again like the rose of the tropics.

It's an old story, that of Porto Rico and its unhappy people, a story of rapacious exploitation by a blundering imperialism. I did not read the "Chardon Rehabilitation Plan for Porto Rico." No copies were available at the office of the Secretary of Agriculture. But to my lay mind, several flaws were apparent. Take one of the best products that Porto Rico used to grow for export— coffee. It takes five years of growth of protecting vegetation before a coffee plantation can be successful. When the cyclone struck Porto Rico in 1928, most of this protective vegetation was destroyed, because the fertile lands sheltered by the hills and situated in the valleys were devoted to sugar cane. Five years from now, where will the P.R.E.R.A., the A.A.A and all the other half-measures be? They are now mere paper barricades against the pressure of profits. In the mountains, where hookworm and tuberculosis flourish under the palm trees, there are stores. They are shacks, a little larger than the so-called dwellings and can be distinguished by a door. Inside, a counter, a National Cash Register, four or five shelves of American canned goods. The San Juan warehouses are crowded with cans of cheap American condensed milk, lard and other products of our national over-production. On the main square in San Juan a Union Square (New York) women's clothing store, has a shop where shoddy goods, slightly inferior to those of New York, make the American cash registers ring in the coin that P.R.E.R.A. doles out.

There are, however, many other realities which make it clear that rehabilitation with one eye on the Navy and the Army and the other on profits, will do little for Porto Ricans. I give only snapshots here and there.

An American woman doctor, working at the Institute of Tropical Medicine which American philanthropy had built on the island, summarized the proof of the malnutrition of the natives. An experiment was conducted on three sets of rats. The first set was fed on blood from the bodies of the natives, the second on vegetable diet, the third on animal. Exposing these rats to contagious disease, the first set died first.

On our way from Ponce our automobile came to a sudden stop. We got out to witness a comic tragedy. In the roadway lay a large bull; around it, a cluster of men engaged in heated conversation. My interpreter explained. The animal had fallen from a rock and broken its legs. One of the men had a knife wrapped in paper, while his assistant carried a rope circled about his chest. The owner of the animal looked mournfully on. The bull had to be killed at once because in that climate disease would soon set in and make the meat unmarketable. The prospective buyer offered $10 for the animal. The owner asked $25. The interpreter explained that the purchaser was right: he would have to slaughter the animal right there and bring it either to San Juan or to Ponce to market. Naively, I suggested that it could be sold to the people living in that vicinity. "Those people," said the interpreter, "can't pay for meat here. Do you see that settlement over there? You could turn those shacks upside down and you wouldn't find a dollar bill in any of them."

"So they take care of the animals, feed them and never see a pound of meat," I said. The interpreter, feeling Porto Rican pride, told me that the people were as well off as some of us in the United States.

That night when I returned to the hotel I went into a study of statistics and decided that the honors were even between my interpreter and myself. One and a half million Porto Ricans on a little island. One of the most over-populated territories in the Western Hemisphere. The sugar centrals, for dividend's sake, destroyed all handicraft industry of an agricultural population, stripped the land of foodstuffs, making the island an agricultural sweatshop for Uncle Sam, where the cash register rings so that pennies may go rolling into the commission houses in downtown New York. If I were a Porto Rican rich enough to buy Porto Rican coffee and sweeten it with Porto Rican sugar, to me that sugar would not taste sweet.

A bird's-eye view of the statistics may give a suggestion of the true picture. A Chinese coolie has to spend 90 percent of his labor to get sufficient sustenance to slave. A Porto Rican laborer has to expend 94 percent. By actual investigation of experts it was found that seventeen articles of consumption, comprising 65 percent of the food necessary to sustain life of a Porto Rican laborer, costs 14 percent more than in New York. When a workingman in New York earned from four dollars to ten dollars a day, the Porto Rican earned from 25 cents to 80 cents. The Porto Rican disease and death rate is twice that of anywhere in the United States. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., former Governor of Porto Rico, says:

> More than sixty percent of our people are out of employment either all or part of each year. . . . Hundreds come to the Government offices weekly with but a single request—work. They do not ask for a dole, merely an opportunity to earn a livelihood.

It was admitted in Federal Government statistics that 36 percent of the Porto Rican male population was unemployed in 1930.

Meanwhile, what were the absentee American corporations which own 60 percent of the wealth of Porto Rico, doing? The basic Porto Rican Act provides that no sugar company may own more than 500 acres of land. This law has remained a dead-letter. The United States Congress took the attitude that the enforcement of this law should be left to the Insular Government of Porto Rico. It is a notorious fact that the Insular Congress is sugar-company controlled. The Chardon rehabilitation plan naively provides for the enforcement of the 500-acre law. When it came up before the Insular Legislature, however, that body adjourned hurriedly.

As an example of the corruption and misgovernment: One sugar company was assessed in 1928 at $3,400,000, while its net income for that year alone was almost three millions and it was capitalized on the basis of 10 percent at over twenty-seven million dollars. Between the years 1922 and 1928 the annual net income of this corporation was between 65 percent and 80 percent of the assessed valuation for taxes. Small wonder that the local government has no money for public schools.

But benevolent American rule has brought cultural values to this exquisite tropical island. I watched a class of children saluting the Stars and Stripes in a schoolyard, to one of Sousa's marches. That, however, was but a surface sign. Porto Ricans cannot forget that Uncle Sam made them citizens only during the World War in order to be able to get a regiment of Porto Rican soldiers into the trenches. The ladies in San Juan have but recently started a movement to get the people into the Carnegie Public Library. The movement was unsuccessful. The Porto Ricans are Spanish to the core. Such English as is spoken by natives is found among the small fringe of shopkeepers and clerks. English is disappearing as a current language. Whenever the basic act of government will be so amended that the Secretary of Education will be named by the Porto Rican Government and not by the American, the little there is of American "culture" will disappear. But an American culture, of a kind, I did discover in San Juan. Prominently displayed near the door of a bookstore, were the lurid booklets of the days of my youth—except that they bore the legend *"Ultimos Episodios de Nick Carter."* I carried back with me to the United States this precious souvenir of Porto Rico. The old American publishers must have sold to the Spaniards these reminiscent cuts and chromos unimpaired in their Gay Nineties form and coloring.

Another bit of culture was to be found in the home of a native lawyer in Ponce. The Grand Rapids period furnishings there assembled would have made a New York scenic artist green with envy.

No, not the Morro Castle, nor the Governor's palace with its bedroom in which the Duke and Duchess of Kent and an American First Lady have slept, are the sights to see in Porto Rico. Go to the hills where the flamboyant tree sharply contrasts with clusters of the luring bella donna and there see the natives in whom Indian, Negro and Spanish blood have blended beauty which by way of mimicry merges them into the sunlit pageantry of their surroundings. Yes, tourist, go to Porto Rico to see the class struggle run riot under the tropical sun.

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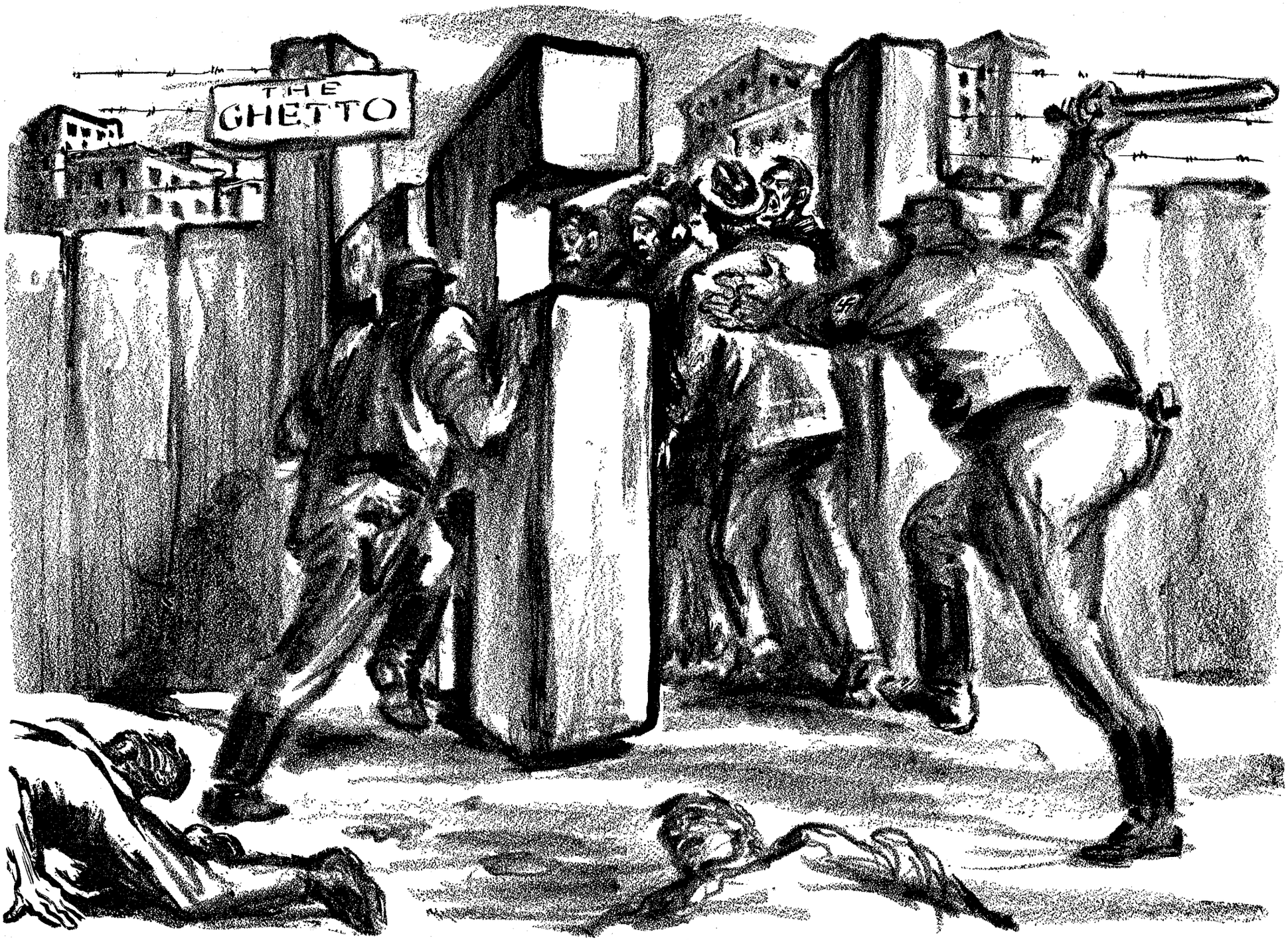

CURFEW HOUR IN BERLIN

Jacob Burck

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Chin Up, Anna!

FRIEDRICH WOLF

OF COURSE, there are a hundred and one reasons I could give why that one time I came so near giving the show away. After all, it might have been fever, or grippe—you see, so much depended on my physical condition. And there I was, crazy with the fear that almost any moment now I'd cave in. . . . But, I suppose the best way is to tell the truth. Well, that very morning I'd had a miscarriage. And here, in the afternoon—can you beat it for sheer nerve!—here comes Hans—knows what I've just passed through—and, just like a man, says: "All right, comrade, as soon as it gets dark, scram!" He repeats the three pass-words. Then he hands me the credentials, for me to sew into the lining of my jacket, along the seam. . . . That's how they are, all of these youngsters! No insight—no understanding—no consideration! Of course Hans can't help noticing the state I'm in. And I must say this for him—he does soften for a moment. But, no! business is business. "Now, Anna, you know the key—the combination—of all the nuclei in all the sections. Our comrades await instructions. . . . Remember, Anna, chin up!" And he is gone. . . .

Well, if I must, I suppose I must. . . . Pull yourself together, Anna There. Now sew in the credentials . . . near the seams . . . And now repeat the three passwords. . . . The words whirl round and round in the seething hollow of my head! Oh this dizziness—this crazy loss of blood! Who knows but that I'm still bleeding within? The midwife did . . . oh if I could only stay in bed —quiet—not stir—three days of heaven—then maybe—

Fever and cold race through my every pore. I button tight my jacket, silently close door, steal downstairs, cast a swift glance up and down the street and glide into the gathering shadows. . . . An April day, this, raw with mists. Behind me I leave the Zoo, Corneliusstrasse, a stretch of the Canal. At the Bridge of Hercules, I cross over. In rhythm with hundreds of other pedestrians, I drag along through the chill moist air. One of these . . . yes? . . . I stop—he stops . . . I hurry on—he hurries on . . I slow down—he slows down! . . . Am I imagining things? . . . Of course—now he is gone! . . . But, is he? . . . No, there he is—in the alley! . . . Oh this damned faint feeling! this dizziness! Supposing I go and faint now? Then all is lost! All—everybody—betrayed! . . . Damn it all, there are limits to everything—even Party discipline! Why, what Party man has the least notion of what a woman has to go through to . . . I was crazy not to protest . . . in my condition. . . . What were those three words again? . . . Yes. . . . *Did I say those words aloud just now?* . . . Here he is now, only a few feet away from me! Did he hear me? . . . I must hurry now—hurry—run! . . . If only I can get away from these half-deserted wharves . . . to the park . . . There I'll be among people . . . thousands of them . . . there I'll shake off this. . . !

Thank goodness! *That's* over! . . .

Safe again at home, dog tired . . . late in the evening . . . home, home . . . bed—bed—then sweet, delicious sleep. . . . Brrr! But I'm freezing—loss of blood and trekking all over town for hours. . . . I'll just prepare a hot water bag . . . and then, bed—sleep . . . at last. . . . Yes? A knock? At this time of night? Is it Hans? . . . Yes! Just a moment! The door flies open. In step two plainclothes men. They're standing within two feet of my face.

"Follow us, please."

"Might I ask why?"

"You'll find out in due time!"

"You see, I'm a sick woman, and. . . ."

"That's all right," one of them interrupts courteously enough, "you won't have to walk an extra step."

He is right. At the curb stands an elegant limousine. Flanked on either side by the plainclothes men, I enter. After me comes a Storm Trooper, who leaps into the seat next to the driver. Four strong, able-bodied men to help bring into headquarters one weak girl, with hardly a drop of blood left in her veins! But how are they to know that? . . .

Its five occupants silent, the limousine purrs its way along the Potsdamerstrasse. Yes, now we're at Leipziger Platz . . . right turn to Stresemannstrasse . . . now Albrechtstrasse . . . No. 8—stop! . . . As I expected — the GESTAPO . . . the Gestapo, then . . . now we'll see what the Nazi secret police offices are like! . . . Keep still, now, stop pounding, my heart! See how calm, cool, impersonal this old former palace is? Now you be just like that, see? . . . How did Hans put it? CHIN UP, ANNA! . . .

But I still can't understand how they got me? Had I attracted attention by my stumbling and running? Had I spoken out loud? . . . Step by step I trace back every happening of the day—the workers I have met—the places I met them in—the delivery of the rotoprints—no—no slip-up anywhere. . . .

Inside the palace gates now. How typical, with Potsdam written all over their schoolgirl complexions, those two Storm Troop guards look, framed there in the doorway! In the courtyard itself, nobody—nothing—only a heavy marble silence. . . . At the inner door, my bodyguards deliver me, undamaged, "return receipt required"! . . . And now over heavy rugs, along endless corridors, through archways, across galleries—all so peaceful, so sleep-inviting—and in such discreet taste—through door after door of smooth, unvarnished oak.

"Wait!" I am standing in an elegant office. Looking down through the window, I see a garden laid out like a park. . . . And that blinking electric sign out there? Wonder what it is. A dance hall? A movie house? Maybe the Europahaus? . . . "Please," breaks in the voice of the platinum-blonde Thusnelda at the typewriter, "please move away from the window . . . here . . . in the middle of the room. . . . Only last week, you know, somebody jumped out of that window. And then they blame us!"

Then comes the examination . . . two hours . . . three hours . . . the hard leather of the chair I sit on buckles my skin. And opposite me sits the Storm Troop leader Lange, district Gestapo commissioner. No mistaking his face! Leave that to the newspapers . . . always the same face—the same faces—now at Goebbel's wedding, now at the monster demonstration in Nurnberg, now in court—always the same: a flat stamped pattern on a wall-paper roll! . . . What's that? I should tell him all about it? About what? Oh, about recent events?

So; he wants to feel me out, find a likely opening. No, big boy, not so easy as all that! . . . Let me see, now . . . how would it be to start with a true incident, one that can't harm anyone? Meanwhile, I'll be stalling for time . . . here goes: "You see, sir, in the office where I work . . . and as to the ice cream parlor . . . I know all this must be boring to you". . . . "Never mind all that," he interrupts impatiently, "you tell me all about your trip to Halle." My trip to Halle! Then all is lost! But who could have —yes, there were those arrests—Or—maybe this is just a trap? . . . Time. . . . Time! . . .

"To Halle? And what would I be doing there? Now, Mugglesee — in Grunau, you know—I did go there, last week, with a girl friend of mine. It was so warm, we thought we'd go rowing a bit. And just as we were going to hire a boat from the old man who—"

"Quit stalling, my dear, With whom were

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you in Halle? Come now, out with it! With whom?"

Stop that pounding, heart! Wait; a little brazenness may turn the trick. . . . "Well, Commissioner, since you know it all, why ask *me?*"

"Just to check up on a few details."

So! I get you, commissioner. You know exactly nothing! Now question on till doomsday!

In fact, for a few minutes I almost forget the condition I'm in. But there it is again —still—dizziness—searing heat of the hard leather against. . . . Wait, now, what's this? Why hold that photo album before me and turn the pages for me? . . . Oh, I see your game. Pardon my yawn, Commissioner. Pictures of comrades all right! Ernst, Alma, Bertha, Nell—dear comrades all . . . these devils must be everywhere with their cameras! Singly, in groups, they have you on record where you would never imagine . . . on the street—in the park—wherever you meet . . . and these single pictures taken at the Identification Bureau. . . . "I don't understand, Commissioner, why you're showing me all this? It means nothing to me. Why, who are these?" . . . Can he hear the pounding in my veins? And in my brain . . . throbbing sheets of rumbling darkness tumbling before my eyes like waterfalls! . . . over and endlessly over again! . . . Hold tight now—no fainting—no giving way! You must, Anna, you must! . . . Chin up, Anna! . . . Yes, Hans, but it was sheer madness to harness me, in my condition, to such a life-and-death Party task! And now, if everything blows up you can go and piece it all together again! . . . *You*—with your schematic Party orders — your keys and cells and nuclei! . . .

"Well, my dear, and how do you like this photo?"

Hell! How did they get this? There we are, the three of us, in the café in Halle. Sparks fly before my eyes. And only last Sunday! The fiends! . . . but how did—Hans, dear Hans—you—and Nell—and here, my back to the camera. . . .

"Nice picture, isn't it? . . . Splendid chap, your Hans. By the way, he dropped in on us two hours ago."

Not a sound from me. Casually I turn the pages in the album; persistently, Lange turns the pages back, always back to the one picture. How does he know? Only an insider could know the names in this nucleus. Has somebody squealed? Who? . . . Where is Hans? . . . Then all is lost! . . .

"Now you can make things much more pleasant for every one, my dear. You don't have to convince me you had nothing to do with planning this underground work. I believe you in advance. Like so many of our compatriots, you were simply caught up in the work before you knew it. Now, we're not worried about the misled. *We* are after the *misleaders!* Now, who gave you the message to deliver?"

"Message? What message? What on earth are you talking about?"

"And what about that?" he snaps, pointing at my back in the picture. . . . Well, now, maybe he's right. It's crazy to go on with it—to deny anything here! . . . Oh, my head! . . . One slip on my part, and the nuclei are all in danger! And why? Why!! Because they were crazy enough to entrust such responsibility to a woman in my condition! There's a limit to any person's endurance, all the more a woman's—an invalid's! . . . The room is rocking . . . left—right . . . left—right . . . my head keeps bobbing like a cork . . . and Lange's finger moves over the swaying pages of the album like a wooden baton directing the surging swaying room. . . .

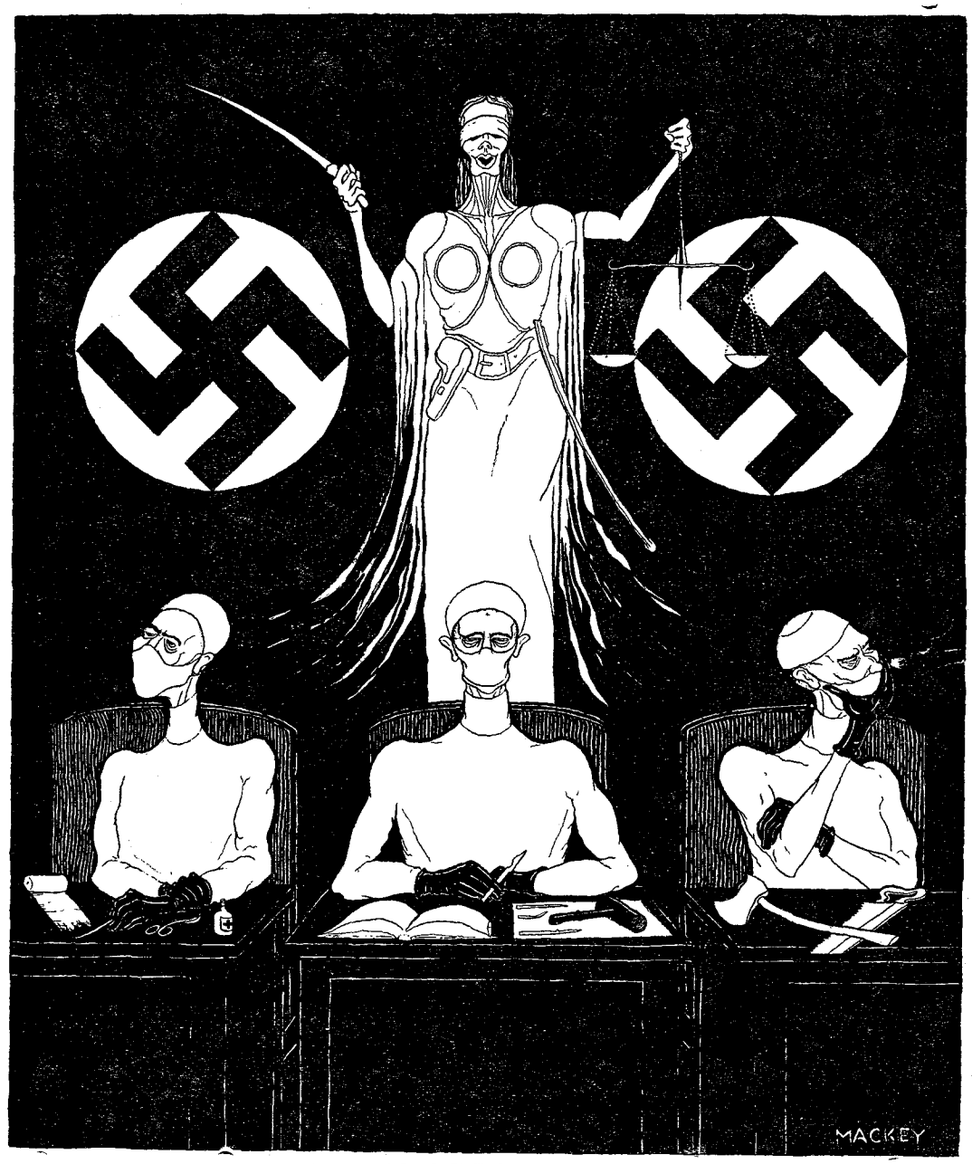
"Will you please give us some intelligent information about the matter in question? Or would you prefer the indefinite hospitality of our 'chambers' downstairs?"

Still, now, still! There. All my muscles holding firm? Good. . . . And now, my dear Commissioner, let me look you once more steady in the eye. Fine! Even the room has stopped rocking. Now then:

"It wouldn't surprise me the least little bit to find a few hundred more women with a back like hers in the picture. All I can say is that I was NOT in Halle."

"As you will, my dear!"

He presses a button; pushes his chair back; an orderly in brown uniform enters. "To I-A." The orderly motions to me. I get up. My knees almost melt from under me. To the "solitary"? . . . No; up . . . one floor—twenty steps—turn; one floor—twenty steps —turn . . . up . . . up . . . only the ceiling above now. . . . The orderly, a twenty-year old youngster, watches me sideways, embarrassed to see me drag along, exhausted, stopping every now and then to clutch the banister more tightly. "Buck up!" he calls to me brusquely in manly chest tones, adding as a sort of afterthought, "No weakening. Upstairs you'll be able to sit down." . . .



THE PEOPLE'S COURT — *Mackey*

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AND now where are we? I see—an artist's or photographer's studio. Scores of photographs, left, right, full face, full length . . . and all over the place finger-print charts. So this is the Identification Bureau! . . . And this little fellow—I almost laugh outright—he is so odd, with his velvet skullcap perched high on his bald head with its fringe of steel-grey hair! A lace-work creature, he, flitting about in this vast room. Now he is clasping my throbbing head in some sort of photographic vise; now he is focusing the camera; and all the while he keeps chattering—chirping—"Well, well, well! . . . Such healthy youngsters, too . . . you wouldn't think it possible . . . that's what politics does to character . . . I'll bet our young miss here was an artist . . . it's those lines about the eyes and lips . . . painting takes concentration . . . and artists always draw their lips tight—so—fine! . . ."

Quite a relief to be listening to this ridiculous man's view on this and that . . . gives me time . . . time for what? I don't know. . . . The young orderly is looking at the photos along the walls. And now the odd little man is turning my head sideways to the other side for a left profile. . . . "Believe it or not," he is chirping, "but right here, without leaving this studio, you get the full play of the game of chance we call Life. Here you see man at his best and his worst . . . worst? . . . not degenerates, understand me . . . I mean Man—with his face a detailed map of his life . . . with its shadows . . . its Inferno . . . especially when it comes to Communists . . . ahem . . . of course, there are also the sympathizers. . . ." He strokes the back of my head. I almost keel over. No, not from his stroking . . . but there, on the wall, not altogether dry yet, hangs a picture! Hans! And that other one in profile, with the big bandage over his eye and cheek—it hasn't been retouched yet—they haven't taken a chance on a full front view! Poor Hans! What they've done to you! . . .

From somewhere far off comes the voice of the mannikin:

"But, little miss, please don't take on so! Nothing will happen to you up here, upon my word of honor! Nothing at all! . . ."

What a little wart! Lucky for me that I'm up here. Bad enough that later, on the stair on my way down, I go into a dead faint. When I open my eyes, I find myself back in the leather chair in Lange's office. On the table, a bottle with cognac, and an empty glass. I can sniff the alcohol they have forced down my throat.

Within a foot of me stands Lange, the Commissioner, looking down at me. "Do you imagine," he says while looking through a document in his hand, "all this is pleasant for us? We respect a brave foe. But first and foremost, we must do our duty." It all sounds so straight-forward, so convincing, so noble! And I so faint—so helpless. . . . For a moment I waver, and at his words, "After all, we're only human!", I feel a pure animal impulse to stretch out right there and go to sleep. . . . But then from the table where Lange is standing: "Out with it, my dear. Tell me all." . . . Well, then, supposing I do—supposing I tell him some cock-and-bull story? Then I'll have at least this one precious night to sleep in! . . . Yes, but what's the use? What good will it do? None! . . . and here I am, numb, dying of fatigue . . . and all the while I feel I am losing blood. Oh, I want to shriek: Leave me in peace, will you! It's sleep I want! Sleep! Don't you hear me? Sleep! . . . Tears must be starting in my eyes . . . I feel the Commissioner's face coming nearer—slowly nearer . . . his grey eyes become larger—larger . . . the pores of his florid skin open before me. . . . "Well, my dear," he murmurs, "out with it!"

Does he mean my being ill? Does he mean the combination key? Does he mean me? Everything is dashing pell-mell through my dizzying brain. Maybe all this is illusion only? Politics! Foe! Party! Cause! What do all these man-made words mean when all a poor woman wants is to sink down to rest—in the arms of some strong man—and forget everything! . . . I recoil suddenly as I feel against my face Lange's thick hot breath, see the widening pores of his face: "Too bad, my dear, that you torment yourself so!" Almost a whisper, these words. I bolt up straight out of my chair, fall back a step, trembling with an indefinable terror. And again that voice, closer and closer, "Well, my dear, out with it!"

Not a sound escapes from my throat—it's as if it were laced tight—but I shake my head and hold my clenched fists to my breast. Something in my presence must be upsetting to Lange himself. He signals to his orderly: "Take her away!"

THE orderly takes my arm. Lange himself comes along. This time it's down—down . . . across balconies . . . through corridors . . . through countless doors . . . and again down—down. . . . But this is too much! How can the Party demand this of a sick woman? What's the sense of it all? How can it all end? . . . A warm draft of air—we must be near the central heating plant. We stop in the small guard-room. Lange hands me over to the guard on duty. Then he goes ahead with the orderly. Here's a footstool and a table! What bliss to sit down, rest my arms on the table, lay my head down, and sleep . . . sleep! . . .

From a million miles away, a voice—his voice—droning nearer and nearer: "Well, my dear out with it!"

Now it's all clear to me. There stands Lange. The old torment will start again—the recurring beating of his question against my throbbing brain!—the opening of his pores—his hot breath rising like a poisonous vapor—then sleep—and again that tortured awakening! . . . Again and ag—"HANS!" Had I shreaked the name? Then all is lost! . . . A beautiful trick, that, Commissioner! Congratulations! Hans! You here—between those two giant Troopers! I can hardly recognize you in that bloodcrusted bandage over your right eye and your whole cheek. . . . But what have they done to you from the time you left the Identification Bureau? Another of their "examinations"! Your poor swollen face! And that pulpy mass—your lips . . . and those swollen lids hiding your eyes . . . and what have they done to your foot? Have they smashed that, too? . . . My poor boy! you look like a bag of meat and loose bones! . . . My poor Hans!

"Your friend is waiting to say 'Hello' to you."

Damn that murderous hypocrite! If I could only smash his face in for him! strangle this soft-spoken fiend with his "I'm sorry for you, my dear!"—this Death's head clown, who expects to trap us by bringing us face to face in this way! Suddenly everything with me is aroused—alive—quick. If I only knew whether or not I did cry out "Hans" . . . Casually enough, I ask:

"Who is this man? And who made such a mess of him?"

"Maybe he'd prefer to tell you himself," purrs Lange. "But first, as old friends, why don't you shake hands?"

This "joke" brings a broad grin to the faces of the guards. For a moment only, I hesitate. Then I go up to the tortured man, whom two guards are holding. I take his hand. I ask him calmly:

"Tell me, sir, do we know each other?"

"I can't see," a voice comes from the swollen face.

"All right, boys, give him a hand."

The Commissioner will have his little joke! The guards understand. One of them grips Hans from behind. The other takes out a matchbox. From it he lifts out two matchsticks. With them he forces wide open Hans' swollen eyelids. Horrible—those eyes staring out of that battered face, yet fixed, unchanging, like those of a drowned corpse . . . in the eye itself, no expression; but in the lids, an occasional twitch. Is it a twitch of recognition? How can we in this split second make him understand—and he, me?

"Come, come, my friends, no false modesty!" comes Lange's voice at my side. "How did things turn out in Halle last Sunday?"

In this one moment, I notice the pulp-beaten eyes of Hans narrow to a slit, tense, asking: What will she say now? . . . Well, Commissioner, that's that! Good boy, Hans! So, all their steel rods and brutal fists couldn't drag it out of you. Red front, comrade Hans! . . . Yes, but how let *him* know all's safe with me too? . . . Yes—that ought to do it. . . .

"You, sir, *you* tell us," I call to Hans, "do we know each other?"

Furious, probably realizing the trick I've played, Lange snarls at me:

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"YOU are not here to *ask* questions!"

"Come, now, Mr. Commissioner, keep cool!" Hans almost laughs outright as he says it. "You'll have to do much better than that. Do you expect me to fall for that provocateur—that bleating she-goat? No, I don't know her," he continues, and takes a violent step in my direction, "but I'll damned well know her again when I see her!"

Only *one* moment, but in that moment, through his torn and twisted eyelids, there breaks a happy fleeting smile, and his mouth melts into one of his precious sweet smiles—which only *I* understand. Oh the dear, darling boy! How I love him, with his poor martyred face, with his drowned-corpse eyes, with his pulp-beaten lips! I love you, darling, more than ever in my life before! and in spite of all the torment you've gotten me and yourself into!

"Take him away!" snaps Lange. And Hans, unsupported now, goes out by himself. In me, too, all weakness has vanished. Our thoughts have joined. Our ranks hold fast. Here in the very dungeon of the Gestapo, in the teeth of their "examination," we have kept faith! The Party line was right! Chin up! Red Front! . . .

WHAT followed then was not half so hard to bear as those first few hours at the Gestapo and those moments of terrible uncertainty when I first saw Hans there face to face. Of course they tried out their whole bag of tricks on me. They put another woman prisoner into my cell—a stool-pigeon, who casually informed me that I spoke in my sleep. Anything to try to break down my resistance. Night after night I was afraid to fall asleep—not an easy job, I'll tell you! And then, because of "uncleanliness," they took away my mattress. And when this actually did bring about my physical collapse, they stuck me into the "tomb"—the solitary—for three days. To me they seemed three years. . . . But, after all, these were merely physical tortures, sandpapering the ends of my nerves until I shrieked. But those three or four times Lange once more tried his tricks on me personally, after his worthies had twisted my wrists, and had threatened me with "night visits," never once was I at a loss as to what to say, as to what the Party line demanded. Firm as a rock, I knew that Hans, too, was holding firm. For, the key to the section nuclei, which they were trying to wring out of us, was known to two human beings only—to Hans and to me. . . .

As to how I got out, that was by fluke. What with my solitary confinement, the darkness, the long sleepless nights, the taking away of my mattress and food, together with my previous loss of blood, I really became so terribly sick that one morning the cell-matron asked whether she should go for the doctor. The devil must have prompted me to say, "For the doctor? No, for the priest, please." Her jaw fell. "The priest?" she gasped. Political prisoners never— She ran for the warden. He came back with Lange. I gasped feebly:

"I was brought up as a Catholic and I don't know what will become of me now. But I want a priest."

Did Lange think I had gone crazy? Did his whole mental picture of me crumble? Did the recent concordat with the Vatican make Nazi officials a little more careful with Catholic prisoners? Whatever it was that led him to act, I got my priest and through him my liberty.

Of course there will be two opinions as to whether I ought or ought not to have worked this trick. But at any rate it made it possible for me to go on with my Party work in another city. And Hans? As unexpectedly as that time in the Gestapo dungeon, we one day ran into each other. He laughed heartily at my story.

"Why, Hans, what sparkling front teeth you have!"

"Sh! a dead secret! They're imitation! The originals I left at the Gestapo!"

—Translated by PAUL FREER.

Correspondence

Referred to Joshua Kunitz

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In one of Browder's articles a statement was made that there are no lawyers in the Soviet Union or that lawyers are not needed under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The truth of the matter is that lawyers do exist in the Soviet Union and in fact if I am not mistaken the First Moscow University gives a special course in jurisprudence. Some of my acquaintances in the Soviet Union were lawyers, one who was trained under the Tzar and the other a recent graduate. As long as the Soviet Union is a State, it must have a code of laws, and in interpreting some laws and settling contractual disputes the services of a lawyer are needed. Of course the lawyer does not exist by fees but is paid like the physician, a salary. The lawyers are available when needed without charge. I have been told that many industries have as part of their set-up a jurisprudence bureau where workers in that organization may consult lawyers.

LEONARD J. GRUMET.

Turtle Creek, Pa.

Strikes in Germany

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In the last days of May, 6,000 workers of the Wanderer Werke in Chemnitz (Saxony) walked out on strike. A few days later 3,000 men employed in the N.S.U. motor plant at Neckars Ulm, stopped work. These are the first important strike actions since the Nazis took power. Heretofore, a strike was considered high treason. The present walkouts signify an important turning point in the people's fight against the Nazi regime.

The first major dispute at Chemnitz occurred last fall, when the plant management attempted to economize. The workers' shop council protested and suggested economizing on the salaries received by President Klee and Vice-President Stuhlmacher, amounting to 183,000 marks annually. For this "effrontery" the shop council was to be dissolved. However, in consideration of the tense atmosphere in the shops, the shop council finally was let off with a reprimand.

Through their repeated failures to win recognition for the demands, the old shop council became discredited in the eyes of the workers. So the Nazis were forced to present an entirely new list for the shop elections in April, 1935. This list according to official reports, was carried by a vast majority of votes. The first step by the board of directors was to present each of the new shop representatives with a motorcycle. This attempt of bribery and the knowledge that ten members of the supervision board (nine of which are Berlin bankers), are receiving 14,000 marks annually, brought the sentiment of the workers to the boiling point. The igniting spark was furnished in May, when the board of directors tried to put through another wage cut. Six thousand workers walked out. They immediately brushed away the shop council and set up a strike leadership of their own. The Gestapo arrested the leaders and started to terrorize the workers. After several days the strike front began to crumble and the workers submitted to arbitration. However, the arbitration turned against them and they went out again.

A second strike occurred in Wuerttemberg where 3,000 workers stopped work. The firm is one of the leading German automobile manufacturers. The cause was the publication of a new wage schedule which, if put into effect, would have reduced the earnings of unskilled workers from 20-25 marks to 18 marks a week.

The workers sent a petition to the government arbitration board and the board reacted by the threat to have all workers tried for sabotage, if they did not return to work without delay. The workers, again discarding the official "representation" by the shop council, stayed out and succeeded after four days to have the wage cut rescinded.

Feeling is running high in other places too. A new engineer entering the Siemens shop in Berlin with "Heil Hitler" was immediately warned by the manager that he had better say "good morni- if he did not want a chunk of coal thrown a- head.

Dissatisfaction among the workers has become general and it can hardly be doubted that more and bigger strikes are lying ahead.

Berlin. OTTO ZIMMERMAN.

Reply to Ann Weedon

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The letter of Ann Weedon in THE NEW MASSES of July 9 makes a whole series of erroneous statements on the relation of the Communist Party to the struggle for liberation of women, and the answer in the heading "see current contents box" is inadequate, to say the least.

The letter speaks of "the new deal Communism proposes to give women" and says that there are no "actual deeds and real results, here and now, in this country." Apparently Miss Weedon would like the C. P. to carry out the liberation of women before the working class destroys capitalism, but this is unfortunately impossible. Women, in common with all other groups, nationalities and classes held

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in bondage by capitalism, will be liberated in this country and in all countries by the proletarian revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party. For complete proof of this we do not "retreat to Moscow for concrete examples" but, far from retreating, point with pride to the first land of the proletarian dictatorship, where the working class, under the leadership of our brother party, is carrying out the emancipation of women in daily practice. Note, however, that it was first necessary to destroy the feudal-capitalist regime and set up a dictatorship of the proletariat.

With regard to the position of women in the movement in this country, Miss Weedon makes the astonishing statement that "the executive positions in the Party are held by men." Even for an "outsider" who "can only estimate vaguely," such a statement reveals a lack of familiarity with the movement that should be conducive to more caution. There is not one leading committee of the Party, from the Central Committee down, that has not got women as members. There is not one field of Party activity, from the great trade-union struggles to the smallest neighborhood campaign, where women have not taken a leading role. From Mother Bloor down, they are known and respected as working-class leaders. Of course they are in a minority as compared with the men. But this is inevitable in a society which stunts the development of women as capitalism does. After all, the Party also draws its human material from capitalist society, in spite of all the talk about foreign agitators from Moscow.

The closing question "Do you feel that women are lacking in ability, or do you admit that you have failed to recognize their ability?" is something in the nature of "heads I win, tails you lose." Neither of these premises can be admitted for a moment.

In concluding, it is entirely laudable and encouraging that Miss Weedon should be as sensitive as she is to the special oppression of women in our society. I suggest that she translate this feeling into some concrete action in one of the organizations that carry on the struggle against oppression of women here and now. The American League Against War and Fascism is one such organization.

J. B.

Briffault's Review

To The New Masses:

Briffault's review of Forsythe's *Redder Than The Rose* was in general excellent and points to the high place which Marxist humor should occupy. But there were, I believe, certain political mistakes which should be pointed out, not only for Briffault's benefit, but so that others should not be misled as to the Communist position in regard to these particular matters.

There is, first, Briffault's statement that "People are asses because they are not Communists and the human species is at present divided into Communists and asses." Whether he is presenting his own or Forsythe's view is not entirely clear, but from the context I gather that this is supposed to represent the latter's view, of which Briffault approves. Indeed, Briffault seems to maintain that this is really the view of all Communist writers, but that they don't express it because of their fear of the "editorial offices," that they ought to cast off their "superrealist haze of mystery about fundamentals," that they should throw their hands down on the table, and openly declare the "truth," that people who are not Communists are asses. Clearly this is a wrong, a sectarian idea. It does not conform to the objective reality. People cannot be classed as asses just because they are not Communists. They are misled, confused, their minds have been and are being continually distorted by bourgeois education and ideology; they suffer under vast illusions. But that does not mean they are asses. They are overcoming these illusions, their minds are being set straight or at least straighter, by the blows of their existence under capitalism and the work of the Communist Party.

Eli Post.

Letters in Brief

International Labor Defense, writing a reminder that July 27 will be the nineteenth anniversary of the arrest of Tom Mooney, says: "May we ask your readers to join with organized labor throughout the country, in commemorating the nineteenth anniversary of Mooney's imprisonment, with expression of their protest against its continuation, the demand for his freedom and for the freedom of his fellow-prisoner, Warren K. Billings. These expressions of protest should be addressed to Governor H. G. Merriam and the California State Supreme Court, at Sacramento, Calif." In addition it is urged that telegrams be sent on the anniversary to Mooney (31921, San Quentin State Prison, California), and Billings (Box 10699, Represa, Calif.).

"Earl Browder's articles on Communism are masterpieces of their kind," writes James H. Burford from Los Angeles. He adds his belief it would be very effective were Browder to continue the series "by describing the process of changing to a Soviet America and the actual set-up and its workings after the changes."

The American League Against War and Fascism in San Francisco informs us that it has arranged a "Hearst on Trial" meeting for July 31 at the San Francisco Trades Temple at which Hearst will be charged with being a war-monger and fascist. The audience will be the jury; evidence will be introduced by witnesses from trade unions, religious groups, liberals, anti-war organizations, etc. The League is leading a boycott against the Hearst press on the West Coast.

A C.C.C. camp "enrollee" who asks that his name be withheld writes: "There is a subtle trend toward fascism—either consciously or unconsciously the officers are molding the enrollees into pliable recruits for a fascist army. Education of the new recruits is based on the simple subjects that would (or could be) useful to a military regime. . . . In spite of desertions the incoming enrollees show an increase in the number of youths out of work in the urban and rural sections—and a determination on the part of officials to regiment the young workers into complacent cannon-fodder. At nearly every assembly, the Commanding Officer implies that thousands of youths are waiting and anxious to join the ranks of the C.C.C.—the fact remains that practically all members of the camps are forced to join because of conditions at home or wherever they are.

Victor King writes from Hollywood that the article "The Crisis of the Middle Class" appearing in the July 2 issue of The New Masses should be "printed into leaflets and distributed among this class by the millions." The picture of the middle class it gives, he says, is so comprehensive "that it sets one to thinking." The New Masses has already had the article reprinted in leaflet form, and will be glad to send copies to readers who will undertake to place them in the hands of doctors, lawyers, grocers, architects, teachers, etc.

I. J. Blocer, who calls himself our "lonely mountaineer reader," sends his pledge from California to buy at least one copy if and when the recent series on Communism by Earl Browder published in The New Masses is published in book form. In the meanwhile, he adds, 'I am binding all these issues containing the series so I will have them to read over again should they not come out in book form." Should the article "Who Are the Americans?" be republished as a one-cent pamphlet, he promises to buy at least fifty and distribute them.

A cotton pickers' strike to start early in August was called by the Executive Committee of the Share Croppers' Union, writes Albert Jackson, secretary of the Union. "In preparing for this strike, we know from bitter experience that a good sized strike relief fund is necessary. The landlords control the relief bureaus in the rural areas and it is very seldom that a striker could get relief." He asks for contributions immediately from all friends of the Southern farm toilers. Acting on his suggestion, The New Masses will accept and forward such contributions. Present conditions under which cotton pickers work are indicated in the demands: $1 per 100 pounds for picking cotton, plus two meals and transportation for temporary hands; $1 a day and room and board for monthly hands, and a ten-hour day. At present, the working day is from "dark to dark," the working men being "driven by mean, gun-toting plantation bosses, sweltering in a broiling sun, being fed a straight diet of sow-belly, cornbread and sorghum syrup; dressed in rags, and working for wages of 35 cents to 50 cents a day."

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CRITICAL REVIEWS by *Alan Calmer, William Phillips, Obed Brooks, Edwin Rolfe, Philip Rahv.*

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Poetry in the Modern Theatre

LEE SIMONSON, in his entertaining book, *The Stage Is Set,* complains of the lack of poetry in the modern theatre. The playwright fails, he says, to make his characters "incandescent and illuminating at their climactic moments because of his inability or unwillingness, to employ the intensifications of poetic speech."

This is largely true. But one cannot suppose that it is due entirely to the perversity or sterility of contemporary playwrights. The mood and temper of the modern stage are reflected in the dry phrasing and conventionality of the dialogue. The material with which the middle-class theatre deals is of such a nature that "the intensifications of poetic speech" would be an impertinence. One cannot graft living fruit on a dead tree. If a playwright believes that the ideals of youth find their full expression in a speech at a college graduation (*Merrily We Roll Along*), one may be quite sure that the words used to express these ideals will not be "incandescent and illuminating."

Simonson notes the symptoms of the disease, but he ignores the cause and cure. He also assumes that the American theatre is *completely* destitute of poetry. This is far from true. During the past season, Clifford Odets has electrified the theatre with the vividness, strength and truth of his dramatic speech. In *Panic,* Archibald MacLeish has found living poetry in the rhythms of contemporary American talk. But many other playwrights have contributed to build up a really proud tradition of imaginative and poetic writing: one need only mention the early plays of Eugene O'Neill, the work of Dos Passos, Basshe, Paul Green, George O'Neil, Dan Totheroh, Edwin Justus Mayer's *Children of Darkness,* Francis Edward Faragoh's *Pinwheel.* In approaching the question of style in dramatic speech, one must give due consideration to what has already been accomplished.

It must be understood that we are not here dealing with poetry in the narrow sense. MacLeish says of blank verse that "as a vehicle for contemporary expression it is pure anachronism." Maxwell Anderson has failed sadly in attempts to breathe life into Elizabethan verse forms: the result is dignified, fluent and uninspired.

If poetic forms are to develop in the modern theatre, these forms must evolve out of the richness and imagery of contemporary speech. The first step in this direction is to clarify the nature of dramatic dialogue: how it functions and what it aims to accomplish. It has been said that the essential character of drama is *conflict,* and that conflict must be expressed in terms of *action.* Does this mean that speech is a decorative design which serves to embellish the action? There is very general confusion on this point: there is a tendency to create a split between dialogue and action. Speech (whether or not it is poetic) is a living part of the events which are the core of the drama. Speech which is abstract, which deals with general feelings or ideas, is undramatic—and, therefore, has no place in the theatre. One sometimes sees plays in which the words and the events proceed parallel to each other, and never meet. However "decorative" the words may be, they are valueless unless they serve to drive the action forward. Dramatic speech must be tested by its concreteness, its qualities of tension and suspense.

If we look into the matter more thoroughly, it is apparent that human speech is always a kind of action, *an extension of action.* When a man speaks he performs an act. Talk is often called a substitute for action, but this is only true insofar as it is a weaker, less dangerous and more comfortable kind of action. It is obvious that speech requires physical effort; it comes from energy and not from inertia.

Speech has enormously broadened the scope of man's activity. In fact, without it, organized activity would be impossible. By speech man is able to accomplish more, to act more extensively. This is elementary—but it enables us to realize the function of speech in the drama: it serves, as it does in life, to broaden the scope of action; it organizes and extends what people *do.* It also intensifies the action. The emotion which people feel in a situation grows out of their sense of its scope and meaning. Animals are apparently incapable of any considerable emotion because they do not grasp the scope of their acts. Thus intensification is also really an extension.

The crises of which a drama is composed grow out of a complex series of events. These events cannot all be included in the action on the stage. Dialogue enables the playwright to extend the action over a far wider range of events. The awareness of these *other* events increases the emotional stress of the characters.

To achieve this intensity and scope, poetic richness is a necessity. It is not simply an attribute of dialogue, which may be present or absent. It is a quality which is indispensable, if dialogue is to fulfill its real purpose. Speech puts the actual impact of events into words: it dramatizes forces which are not seen. To do this effectively, to make these other events *visible,* requires language which is incandescent. This is not a matter of "beauty," but of achieving the color and feel of reality. One may say that genuinely poetic speech produces a physical sensation in the listener.

Poetry is too often regarded as an obstruction between the writer and reality, rather than a sharper perception of reality. Shakespeare's poetry soars, but it never escapes. In recent years, only the plays of J.M. Synge have attained the turbulent realism of the Elizabethans. Synge says: "On the stage one must have reality and one must have joy; and that is why the intellectual modern drama has failed and people have grown sick of the false joy of the musical comedy, that has been given them in place of the rich joy found only in what is superb and wild in reality. . . . In a good play every speech should be as fully flavored as a nut or an apple and such speech cannot be written by anyone who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry."

Synge refers to the highly-colored speech of the Irish peasants about whom he wrote. Are we to conclude that joy has died and that we live "among people who have shut their lips on poetry?" To anyone who has opened his ears to the cadences of American speech, the question is absurd. Dos Passos has been very successful in catching what is "superb and wild" in the reality of American talk. Basshe has given us the full flavor of the East Side in *The Centuries.* More recently, Odets has found gaiety and warmth and singing beauty in American speech.

The only speech which lacks color is that of people who have nothing to say. People whose contact with reality is direct and varied must create a mode of speech which expresses that contact. Since language grows out of events, it follows that those whose talk is thin are those whose impression of events is pale and abstract. Then what about the popular myth of the "strong, silent man of action?" Such a man (if and when he exists) is the ideal of the upper class leader, not emotionally involved in the events which he controls.

"Good dialogue," says Baker, "must be kindled by feeling, made alive by the emotion of the speaker." Emotion divorced from reality is *inhibited* emotion, which therefore cannot be expressed. Freud and others maintain that inhibited emotion finds inverted expression in dreams and fantasies. These fantasies are also a form of action. It is conceivable that this material may be used in literature and drama (for instance, the dramatic nightmare in James Joyce's *Ulysses*). However, when we analyze fantasies of this type, we find that what makes them intelligible is what connects them with reality. An

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individual's dream of escape may be satisfactory to *him,* but its social meaning lies in knowledge of what he is *escaping from.* But as soon as this knowledge is supplied, we are back in the field of known events. The theatre must deal with emotion which can be expressed—the fullest expression of emotion comes from men and women who are close to reality, aware of their environment, uninhibited in their perceptions.

The stage today is largely concerned with people whose main interest is escape from reality. The language is therefore thin and lifeless. When the middle-class playwright attempts to achieve poetic handling of mythical or fantastic subjects, his speech remains colorless; he is afraid to let himself go; he is trying to hide the link between fantasy and reality. He is escaping and endeavoring to conceal his escape, to cover his tracks.

In the past fifteen years, the theatre has made a desperate effort to find more colorful material, more vibrant speech. Playwrights have discovered the lively talk of soldiers, gangsters, jockeys, chorus girls, prizefighters. The stage has gained tremendously by this—but the approach to this material has been limited and one sided; dramatists have looked only for sensation and cheap effects, slang and tough phrases and they have found exactly what they were looking for. There is also singing poetry in common speech; it grows out of moments of deeper contact with reality, moments that are "kindled with feeling."

Today, in a period of intense social conflict, emotions are correspondingly intense. These emotions, which grow out of daily struggle, are not inhibited. They find expression in language which is heroic and picturesque. To be sure, this is not a world of the "rich joy" of which Synge speaks. There is exaltation in conflict; there is also fierce sorrow. This is equally true of the plays of Synge: *Rider to the Sea* and *The Playboy of the Western World* can hardly be described as *happy* plays.

Among "refined" people (including "refined" playwrights) there seems to be an idea that all workers talk alike—just as all prizefighters, or all chorus girls, are supposed to talk alike. The speech of American workers and farmers is very personal and varied. It ranges all the way from repetitious slang to moments of startling beauty. No dramatist can ignore the task of capturing the richness, the unrivalled poetic possibilities of this speech. JOHN HOWARD LAWSON.

(This is an excerpt from a forthcoming book on the technique of playwriting.)

A Flight from Fact

SOCIAL WORK YEAR BOOK, 1935. New York, Russell Sage Foundation. 698 pp. $4.

ONE might expect to find, in this reference work of 698 pages, a valuable mine of information bearing on the social conditions of our time. Social work, during the past six depression years, has been catapulted to a position of unprecedented prominence. Dealing as it does with the human casualties and cast-offs of our socio-economic system, it occupies a more focal vantage-point for viewing the carnage wrought than any other profession. A volume claiming to be not merely a year book, but a "concise encyclopedia of social work and related fields" should present a wealth of basic data on the subject. But disappointment is in store for any who cherishes such an expectation.

The Year Book is divided into two parts: nearly six hundred pages are devoted to articles on social work and allied subjects; the rest contain unusually well-arranged descriptive directories of social agencies. The whole is edited by Fred S. Hall, of the Russell Sage Foundation.

A striking feature of this volume lies in the distorted "objectivity" commonly found in respectable reference works of its kind. This objectivity, we usually discover, consists mainly in a studious avoidance of basic criticism of the status quo. (Bias, you see, ordinarily becomes evident only when it represents a departure from "accepted" views.) "This is not a manual of what ought to be," we are told in the preface of the Year Book, "it is a record of what is." We would have no complaint if this object were achieved. If the fundamental facts were presented, even though logical conclusions were omitted, we should at least have the basis for correct interpretation. There are, to be sure, plenty of facts to be found in this work. Some of these facts are vital and useful; many more are irrelevant or trivial. Throughout the book, exaggerated emphasis is placed on minor details, while fundamental facts are played down or omitted. Real issues are side-stepped with the slipperiness of a Red Grange going down a football field.

Certainly, one of the most significant phenomena witnessed in the social work profession last year was the dramatic crystallization of a strong rank-and-file movement repudiating the "stretcher-bearer" philosophy that has dominated social work. It called instead for militant support of the working-class movement in order to achieve a preventive program against social ills and insecurity. The philosophy and aims of the newly-crystallized group were clearly enunciated by Miss Mary van Kleeck in her famous papers read before the 1934 Conference of Social Work, and were reflected in the publication of that dynamic rank-and-file organ, *Social Work Today.* How does the Year Book dispose of this important occurrence? Here's how the issue is evaded in the preface:

> Proposals for reform, unless actively espoused by social agencies, are not considered. For example, the damaging effect of the depression upon the clients of their agencies constitutes a challenge to all professional social workers. What should be their attitude towards plans for preventing future depressions, in contrast to programs which aim to mitigate their severity or furnish help for enduring them? The response which social workers have made to that challenge is not discussed in the functional articles of the present issue, for such a discussion—entering the realm of political and economic theory—is not in harmony with the purpose of the Year Book.

The subject is discussed, however, in the article on "Unemployment" (of all places!), where the author, Dr. Kenneth L. M. Pray, presents this seemingly impartial comparison

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between the aims of the two main groups among social workers:

> The one group sees the intrenched force of ownership opposing the organized force of united workers. Regarding this conflict of forces as inevitable under a system of capitalism, it proposes that social workers shall join in the struggle on the side of labor. The other group, *impressed with the progress already made toward curbing the irresponsible acquisition and use of wealth,* and toward equalizing the bargaining power of capital and labor, and hopeful of ultimately attaining a system of economic relationship, on a democratic basis, in which the interests of owners and workers may be rationally reconciled, doubts the necessity for the revolutionary route, and regards support of that theory by social workers as involving the abandonment of their professional tools and skills. [Emphasis mine—H. C.]

Note here the (probably unconscious) absence of qualification in the italicized passage, as if it were an unquestioned fact that the irresponsible acquisition of wealth was really being curbed, as if statistics gathered by unimpeachable sources do not show conclusively that the wealth of the few keeps increasing at an accelerated rate against a background of reduced real wages and lowered standards of living.

The editor states that contributors were cautioned against expressing personal opinions in their articles. Nevertheless, the whole work is filled with bias, implicit and explicit, in favor of the present order. Strewn throughout the book are gems of impartiality such as the personal praise of the *"finely conceived* Civilian Conservation Corps development" in the article on "Foster Care for Children." We get another example of objectivity in the article on "Transient and Homeless Persons," where the author obligingly presents "the recommendations of the transients themselves, represented in the Youth Congress held in New York City in August, 1934." This Congress, we are told, endorsed the federal transient-camp system, and urged enlargement of the camp program. The author carelessly neglects to mention, however, that the "Congress" she speaks about was not the bona-fide Youth Congress, but a rump session held by a handful of incipient fascists who bolted the Congress proper when the latter refused to submit to dictatorial rule. The *real* Congress, comprising an overwhelming majority of the original delegates, went on record as bitterly arraigning these transient camps (known as slave camps to their inmates) and calling for their immediate abolition!

Even more grievous than the "errors" of commission, perhaps, are those of omission. Often the significance of a book (and this is especially true of reference works) lies not in the material it presents, but in the essential data it excludes. The National Congress on Social and Unemployment Insurance, representing a broad united front of professional and working-class groups (including many social workers), was held in the first days of January, 1935, and hence comes well within the scope of the Year Book. Why is it that this Congress receives no mention whatever, although it was one of the major events in social welfare during the period covered?

Another very important event relating to social workers was the President's highly-publicized Conference on Economic and Social Insurance held in the fall of 1934, to which many prominent social-work leaders were invited to help map out a program that would guarantee "security to every man, woman and child in America." Yet this conference receives only casual mention, and no description, in the Year Book. Is this omission attributable to the fact that the conference represented one of the crassest betrayals of social workers on record? Is it because Roosevelt forced the "representatives" of social work to adopt an emasculate program of security and then threw even that into the scrap-heap once it had served its ballyhoo purposes? Is it because any detailed discussion of this conference would involve the painful necessity of exposing the Great Idealist in the White House?

Why is the important subject of Social Insurance dismissed in a fifty-word definition, while many relatively unimportant subjects are discussed at length in articles of 1,000 words and more? True, several aspects of the subject (old-age assistance, etc.) are discussed separately, but every social worker knows that social insurance, in a very significant sense, represents far more than the mere sum of its parts. Was the subject omitted because it involves embarrassing excursions into the fields of economic and political theory?

Beneath the blanket of "objectivity" laid down with so much ceremony in the preface, we find in this volume evasions of the essential, distortions of reality and a slew of Pollyanna veneerings. The myth of impartiality dies hard, but here we have one more instance of its impossibility. All presentations of facts involve interpretation, since there must be selection, emphasis and arrangement of these facts, arbitrarily culled from the total body of available data. The soundness of the paradox that an accumulation of partial truths may be used to distort the whole truth is once more glaringly revealed. Like most reference works of its type, this Year Book represents, essentially, a flight from the fundamental fact.

HENRY COOPER.

The Making of a Riga Correspondent

MOSCOW CARROUSEL, by Eugene Lyons. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

THE Riga or Copenhagen correspondents supplying "news" about the U.S.S.R. are not necessarily rogues and fabricators. They may be doing their job "for the good of the revolution" (a "real" one, of course). Above all, they are doing their job, they can persuade themselves, for the sake of the humanity so woefully lacking under the sinister Five Year Plan.

For instance, Mr. Eugene Lyons. He wound up his none too brilliant career as a Moscow correspondent for the United Press in true Riga fashion. However, judging from *Moscow Carrousel* he was pining away for the "human values" totally lacking under the reign of the "party hierarchy."

The book is a collection of impressions about Moscow and Muscovites written—some of them well written—in different periods since 1928, when Mr. Lyons began his job. A pilgrim so ardently in search of Truth and Justice might have at least dated each chapter. The average reader left without such guidance will no doubt accept situations and difficulties of three and five years ago for the present-day Soviet life. As in most such books, the self revelation is the most significant of all its "revelations." The real feature of *Moscow Carrousel* is that it shows you what happened to a correspondent obsessed with the idea that the "human approach" is the monopoly of the foreign colony in Moscow, whereas the Kremlin had nothing but contempt for human life—"including proletarian life"—(p. 363).

Moscow Carrousel is a strange mixture. Two or three eloquently written chapters about Moscow, about Stalin, are drowned in a froth of light and varied matter flavored with dashes of the "purest" Riga spice. Most characteristic of the latter kind is the statement (p. 58) that "few Russian representatives in the outside world are permitted to take their wives and children with them." Mr. Lyons no doubt *knows* that almost all Soviet representatives in New York, for instance, happen to have their families with them. On the other hand, he himself talks of American engineers in the U.S.S.R. who had left their families behind in Milwaukee and Kalamazoo—presumably to give some Russian girls short-lived hope of being saved from "drowning" (the way one Russian stenographer was permanently "saved," according to Lyons, by marrying a foreigner). But Russian engineers traveling to the U. S. A. leave their wives behind—as hostages.

Mr. Lyons writes mainly about "former people," "left overs." His heart goes out to them and to the Nepmen, to the Russians in general "who dare not even think in their own beds" (p. 57) what the noble foreigners are allowed to say with impunity. (However, in another chapter we find a Russian peasant holding forth against the Kremlin with no one interfering). Some of these characters or even most of them may even be true ones. But—and this is the important thing—you will be expecting in vain a man who spent six years in Moscom to show you at least *one* sincere and intelligent Soviet worker or one sympathetic Communist functionary.

Mr. Lyons was stewing in a certain circle, mostly foreign specialists and diplomats. He

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was feeding on "rumors." He was a megaphone for people who, because of humiliating failures in a new social system in which they have lost status and to which they cannot adjust themselves, are against the Soviet regime. The readers of the United Press service became fed up on Mr. Lyons' "rumors." A Riga correspondent in Moscow was an anomaly even to readers in far away America.

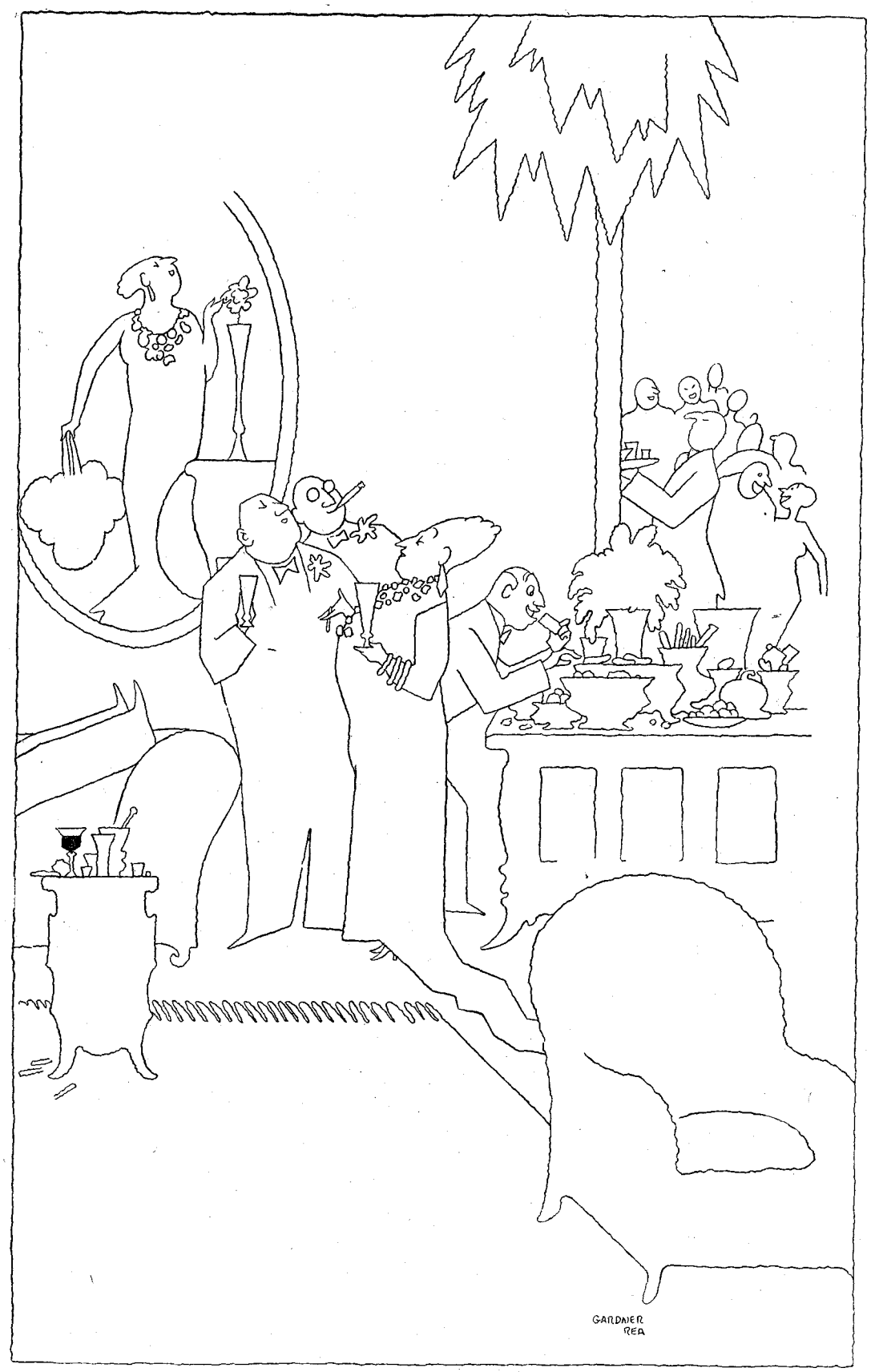
Mr. Lyons' babble about "disappearing people" (p. 6) reminds me of what I had the occasion to check up while in Moscow in 1929. On the afternoon of November 6, a friend of Mr. Lyons, also a foreign correspondent, told me a "secret": Bucharin is arrested. The man was visibly touched by the "Soviet cruelties." The next morning I saw Bucharin on the Lenin masoleum in the Red Square witnessing the parade. . . .

Mr. Lyons, by his own admission, went about buying antiques and his heart was aching for the "former people" forced to sell him their cherished objects—at low prices, we presume. He became their spokesman. The more he vegetated in this debris of the past, the more dissatisfied the United Press subscribers became, the more he tried to placate them with all kinds of information sent out via different channels. Until it became clear for the United Press that there is no necessity of maintaining a Riga correspondent in Moscow.

Lyons was first to get an interview with Stalin (because of the United Press, of course, although Lyons is trying to place himself on the same level with Barbusse, Shaw and Wells. . .). He messed his assignment. Duranty, who followed him, made much more of the interview, as well as of his job in general. Lyons attempts to brush away Duranty and others as "pro-government" people. Lyons is decidedly *not* pro. But he is pitiful in his argument that the United Press recalled him from his job because of that.

Because he was stewing in his circle, because he listened to whispers rather than used his eyes, because he made a triumph over a petty game of trying to outsmart the "censors," his stuff became worthless. Because of his "smart" style, the wink and smirk in each paragraph, *Moscow Carrousel* is worthless as a mirror of Soviet life, in spite of the eloquence attained in some of the chapters.

PAUL NOVICK.



"Of course, I personally have no quarrel with Soviet Russia." *Gardner Rea*

The Wreck of Good Lives

BLESSED IS THE MAN, by Louis Zara. Bobbs Merrill. $2.50.
WEEP NOT FOR THE DEAD, by Michel Matveev. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

SOMEHOW, in spite of the fact that these two books are as different as two books could well be, there is a connecting link between them. Each reveals the ghastly way in which talent is crushed and wasted in the capitalist world.

Matveev's central character is a sweet singer of Jewish folk songs who, after the pogroms committed by the Whites in south Russia during 1919, flees the land, with his wife and mother and his brother and the latter's family, and is hounded and persecuted in one country after another. He is starved and beaten, imprisoned and detained, until one's flesh almost creeps with the weary, senseless cruelty and monotony of it all. Thrown about like a dirty rag from Russia to Rumania to Poland to Turkey to Palestine to North Africa, the little group finally end their painful and futile odyssey in Paris, where the singer, to keep body and soul together, toils almost twenty-four hours a day at the fur trade. Hopeless and more hopeless grows his life, and all the song is crushed out of him. One day a worker, "in corduroy trousers," greets him with: "Good morning, comrade," and a new light flares for a moment in his soul.

"It was sublime music to me. I wished

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that I could have made a song that would have caught the sound of it: 'Good morning, comrade'."

But no. The inspiration is not followed through. Instead: "What was I working for? For whom? My work did no one any good. I thought of death; that would put an end to everything."

But he does not die. The "good morning, comrade" fades from his mind under the pressure of his drudgery; his sister-in-law dies; his wife and mother quarrel; his brother disappears. "Life has to go on." That is all.

Louis Zara has created a character that will live: Jacob Krakauer. Coming to this country from Szaki, Russia, in 1890, he soon learns the American secret of success: make a profit at any price. Strong of body, keen of mind, good of heart, Jake Krakauer, in a Soviet land, might have become a great leader—a shock trooper of production, a planner for the public good, an inspiration to his sons and the sons of others. But what happens to him?

As a loader of hay in a livery stable—his first job, at three dollars a week—he almost unconsciously learns to pile extra weight on the wagons of those who "tip" him. As a hauler of coal, he soon learns how to leave a residue in his wagon and sell it through underground sources at a handy profit. As the owner of a fruit and vegetable store, he learns how to fix his scales so that they register a pound for every 15½ ounces. And each time, a rationalization to soothe his twinging conscience. "Understand how a half-ounce can matter: not to the customer, of course . . . but for the greengrocer a half-ounce and a half-ounce make no mean profit."

But as the years pass and the store grows to two stores, to three, to five—to the Krakauer Krown Food Shops—Jake learns that the really big money is made legally: Stocks. Bonds. Real estate. Jake can smell a drought coming on, stock up at a low price and sell just as prices reach their peak. From a hard worker he becomes a coupon-clipper. From the ghetto he moves to a fine estate. The trappings of Judaism, cast aside while he was a laborer, a huckster, are doomed once more. Ho, everyone kowtows to Jake Krakauer now! Philanthropy makes demands upon him, but he never turns it down, for, as the author slyly insinuates, so much money is pouring in that what is another thousand dollars, another ten thousand? Even the stock-market crash does not affect him; that too, he smelt in advance. Defiantly he cuts wages—and opens a super-store on State Street. And as the book ends, we find him planning a nationwide network of Krakauer Stores.

This progress of success Louis Zara traces with a fine sense of the realities implicit in it. The personal life of Krakauer is given in rich detail. Each of the scores of characters springs to life under the author's touch; each belongs where he is. The futility of Krakauer's life is apparent. At the end, he is deserted by most of his five children (except for what they can get out of him), estranged from his two brothers (one of whom he has exploited), spurned by the wealthy gentiles (except when they are after his wealth or political influence), bewildered by a deepening economic crisis, robbed of his old cronies because of his station and their poverty, racked by growing bodily infirmity; what is there left for Jake Krakauer? Nothing but the grubby business of trying to squeeze ever more and more profits from the toil of others. The wreck of a good life.

JOHN DRAKE.

Two Pictures of Society

CHICHI, by Rachel Grant. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. $2.
WALLS AGAINST THE WIND, by Frances Park. Houghton Mifflin Co. $2.

CHICHI, according to its publishers, is a "priceless" satire "on certain publishing methods." It tells the story of a society gal who decides to impress her friends by writing a book. With the help of her male friends she gets the opus under way, vamps a publisher into giving her a contract after he has seen only the first chapter, and presto! by means of literary teas and publicity becomes the author of a best-seller. It doesn't matter that her offspring is mostly illegitimate, that it takes an overworked assistant editor's evenings to put it into readable shape: our social wasp quickly acquires the idea that she is God's gift to literature. On Miss Grant's typewriter this skit, however excellent its possibilities, becomes not a satire on publishers, but simply a weakly sarcastic sketch of a Parkavenooish gal who accidentally goes literary. The broader and sharper aspects of the tale escape the author entirely; she spends her time emphasizing what the reader already knows after he has read the first two chapters. "Chichi" is of average height, weight and depth and would go well in a room which has a baby-blue picture on the wall.

Frances Park is a different sort of a writer. Whatever "average" tendencies her novel has are due more to her lack of a sense of direction than to any inability in writing. Occasionally her story falls into the deeply-grooved paths of fiction, not knowing somehow where else to go, and the novel loses whatever individuality it might easily have had. *Walls Against the Wind* tells about an American girl who goes to France to visit her mother whom she hasn't seen since she was a tot. When she arrives at her mother's country home she finds an unfriendly half-sister on the premises and an attractive young musician nearby, on whom half-sister has already cast covetous eyes. Tiring of the unpleasant atmosphere, Kay goes to Paris. Luke, the young composer, follows to make his debut in Paris as a pianist. They soon fall in love but a number of complications block their happiness: Luke's devoted sister falls for a man who has "animal magnetism" and is thoroughly disliked by Luke; Kay's half-sister lets her jealousy get the best of her. Things are finally straightened out somewhat and Luke and Kay go to the Soviet Union where "anything can happen."

With her keen understanding of sensitive characters and her happy knack of suggesting the subtleties of human relationships without overstatement, Miss Park makes her story much better than it sounds in brief synopsis form. Her chief trouble is that she deals with her characters as though they were suspended from the material environment about them. When Miss Park has learned to integrate people with the realities about them, she will undoubtedly turn out better novels than this one.

JAY GERLANDO.

Current Art

YOU will not find the exhibition at the Artists Union listed on any of the "official" art calendars, such as are gotten out by the Municipal Art Commission for summer tourists, but if you are interested in serious and vital contemporary art you will find it worth your while to pay this show a visit. (Artists Union, 60 West 15th Street.)

The paintings are by artists on Project 262 (mural painting) of the New York City Works Division. Relatively few murals or studies for murals, are present, the artists preferring to show their own conceptions here. Although many of the names are well-known in the art world (Charlot, Shahn, M. Soyer, Refregier, Block, Edie, to mention but a few), one of the most significant aspects of the exhibition is the high caliber of the work by many of the artists who are relatively unknown to the gallery art world. In its varied character and general liveliness this show is one of the most interesting of the summer art season.

Also worthy of your visit is a small but excellent graphic exhibition at the LaSalle Gallery, (123rd Street and Broadway) where a group of revolutionary artists are represented by good prints and drawings, some of which have been seen before but will bear reseeing.

If you did not see Joe Jones' exhibition a few months ago by all means take advantage of the present opportunity to do so at the return engagement of these splendid paintings at the A.C.O. Gallery, 52 West 8th Street.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

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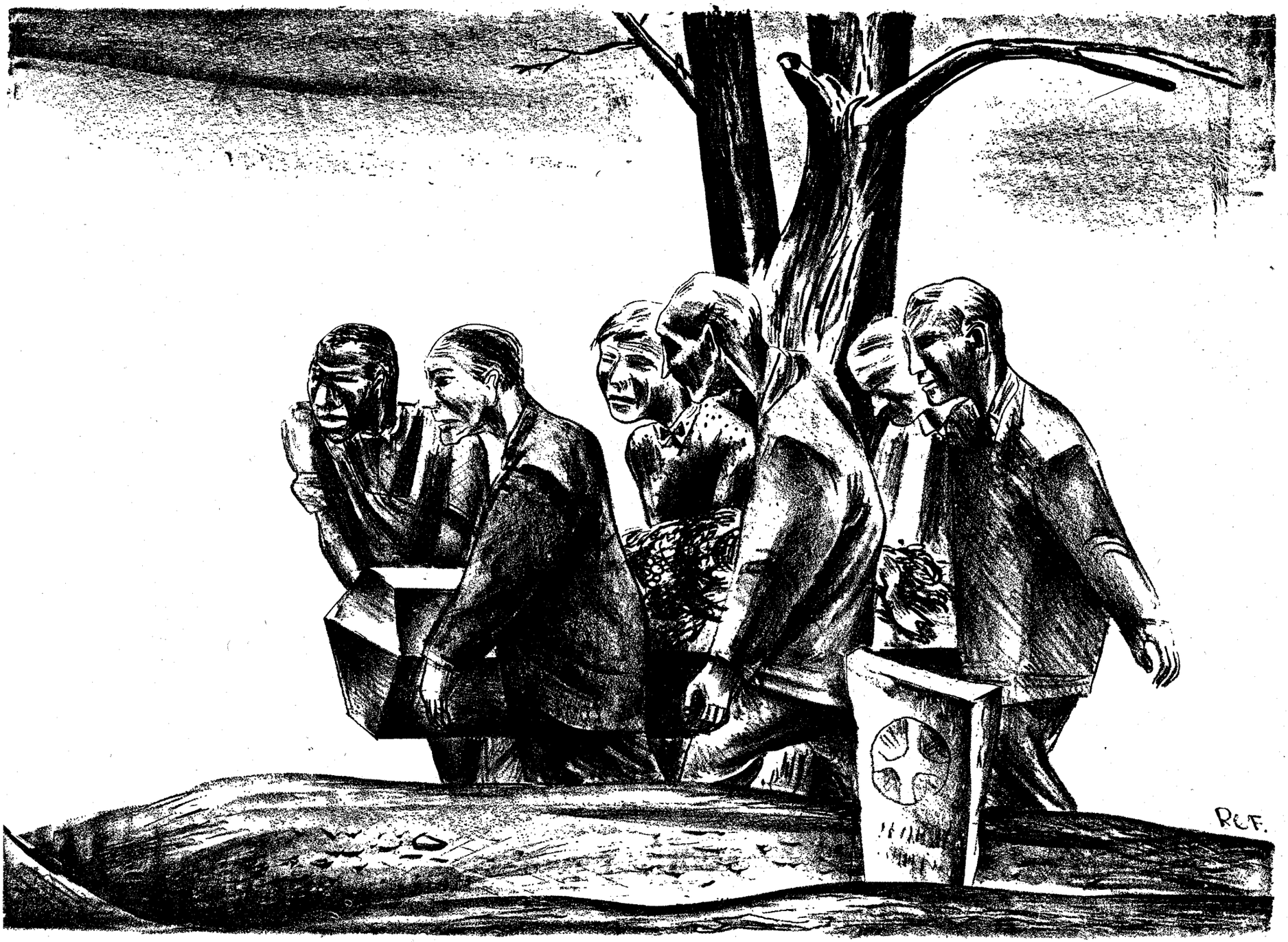

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Reductio Ad Mercurum

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHAT Mr. Paul Palmer of The American Mercury has and thinks he has are two utterly different things. Without delving too intimately into the mind of the gentleman, it is fair to assume that when he acquired The Mercury he had some notion of furthering a career which would afford him the confidence of important personages and even, indeed, a sensible influence upon American life. The passion for the literary life is comparatively new among the families of the great rich and it is only in recent decades that the publishing business has come to have a standing apart from and above ordinary commerce. The result is that Yale and Harvard are filled with wealthy youths who are content to dispense with anything as vulgar as a monthly salary if they may only be permitted to function in such a rarefied atmosphere. Since with Mr. Palmer the matter was more simple because of his former newspaper experience—more simple because his experience as a former Sunday editor of The New York World naturally made him interested in all forms of publishing rather than publishing as being a genteel way of keeping out of poor rooms—it was only proper that he should accept The Mercury as an opportunity. I say "accept" advisedly because former editors of the Sunday section are not given to purchasing monthly magazines out of hand. What altered affairs for Mr. Palmer was his marriage into the Lewisohn family. Since it was obviously unthinkable for a Lewisohn son-in-law to engage in the grubby practice of newspaper work, The Mercury was ideal.

A magazine, like a snake, is hard to kill. It may have been sinking for years, as in the case of The Mercury, but there still always clings to it the air of its former grandeur and invariably somebody will be found who thinks it can be restored to its old state. The Mercury, once a money maker under Mencken and Nathan (later Mencken alone), had become, still under Mencken, a failure of rather juicy proportions. There was no change for the better under the editorship of Henry Hazlitt, who followed Mencken, but there was a decided increase of interest when it adopted a left-wing policy under Charles Angoff, Mencken's old assistant. All that was ended, however, with the arrival of Palmer.

What Palmer originally had in mind as a policy for his magazine I do not know, but his plan is rather obvious now. It may even be contended that his adoption of a fascist policy is a direct result of the strike of his office employes but it is hardly likely that an editor would care to have it said that his mind was of such weak stability. The strike is still going on, with the picket lines growing by the week and public opinion concerning The Mercury obviously no kinder than before. The causes of the strike are well known to readers of this magazine but it may be pertinent to mention the publication of a little folder by The Mercury management in defense of its strike actions which strangely omitted the salient fact that the case had been adjudged in favor of the strikers by the Regional Labor Board.

However, what seems even more significant about the mind of Mr. Palmer and about the future trend of the magazine was the publication, in its July issue, of a stirring article by a gentleman named Lord Macaulay. It was titled "A Timely Letter from Lord Macaulay" and one would be justified in experiencing a twinge at such consorting with the nether world if it were not immediately followed, in smaller type, with the information that the letter was written in 1857 to a correspondent in America. Lord Macaulay is saying, in short, that he distrusts democracy in its entirety and that he feels quite strongly that *"institutions purely democratic must, sooner or later, destroy liberty or civilization, or both."* Coming in the year 1935, this is news indeed. What the honorable Lord feels is the ideal form of government is one in which *"the supreme power is in the hands of a class, numerous indeed, but select; of an educated class; of a class which is, and knows itself to be, deeply interested in the security of property and maintenance of order."*

This appears in a department known as The Open Forum, where letters from readers are featured. Since it is evident that the Honorable Lord would have difficulty in reaching the editor of The American Mercury by direct correspondence, it can only be agreed that the editor of The American Mercury must have had some purpose in dredging up the Honorable Lord's epistle from other sources. In other words, it is plain that Mr. Palmer feels he has got hold of something good. Not only is the Lord Macaulay letter ideal for his purposes but the sentiments expressed can act as a rallying cry for the magazine. What the Quality Magazines—Scribner's, Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, Forum—attempt to do is maintain the old liberal attitude. All sides must be heard, every opinion must be respected, no matter how idiotic. Palmer sees the fallacy of this and looks around him at the comparative decay of the old line periodicals. He can do one of two things; Go Left or Go Right. He needs an issue, he needs to tap a body of readers who otherwise would ignore The Mercury under Palmer as it had ignored it under Mencken. Hence Lord Macaulay and hence the fine fascist hand of Laurence Stallings in the book reviews. In the July issue Stallings reviewed Swing's *Forerunners of American Fascism;* in August he is reviewing Chamberlin's *Russian Revolution* in an extended comment which for sheer childish nonsensicality has not been equaled on the American continent since the early works of Mr. Madison Grant and Mr. Hoffman Nickerson, the local defenders of the Aryan theory.

But this brings up the problem of Mr. Palmer's ability, the issue of fascism, the attitude of the Lewisohns and the Knopfs to the new trend and the possibility of capitalizing on such a stand. There is the heartening news from Hong Kong that James H. W. Cromwell, husband of Doris Duke, is racing home for the sake of saving the nation. I have written elsewhere of the possibility of a group being formed which would include Mr. Firestone Jr., Mr. Paul Mellon, Mr. Cromwell and others of wealth who had the better interest of the country at heart. They would naturally be joined by the Light Horse Cavalry of Victor MacLaglen of Hollywood and by other eager youths comparable to the fine flower of Germany who find nothing more exciting than riding down a Jewish peddler on the Kurfürstendam. Knowing nothing of Mr. Palmer's mind, I have no way of estimating his interest in such a cause but there is always the edict of Lord Macaulay to lead him. " . . . *The supreme power is in the hands of a class, numerous indeed, but select. . . .*" That might appeal to a young man who had taken over a moribund magazine and needed a following.

There are a few hitches to the plan, however. For one thing, unless Mr. Palmer is willing to go into the use of pictures, there is little likelihood that he can get any great following in an audience represented by Mr. James Cromwell. There is also Mr. Palmer's past as a Sunday editor. By the arrival of the August issue of The Mercury, it became plain that Palmer of The World was still Palmer of The World. Included

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among the articles are "The Truth about Hangovers," by Jerome W. Ephraim; "In Defense of Uncivilized Drinking," by Malcolm Logan; "The Present State of Television," by Thomas Coulson and "The Gentle Art of Selling Manuscripts," by Berton Braley. They are pieces you read in the subway and leave behind on the seat when you reach your station. With all kindness, we may assure Mr. Palmer that he is up against stiff competition with such literature. There is always Hearst and there is always the advantage a weekly publication has over a monthly. There is finally The Mercury strike itself, one of the most earnestly pursued and effective in all labor history. Seven people and a great principle are involved. Mr. Palmer sits in his sanctum and refuses to have utterance with the strikers or their sympathizers. It is entirely possible that he will still be there one year or two years from now, publishing his green-covered magazine and content with the knowledge that The Mercury has reached its ultimate state as an inter-family memorandum of the Lewisohn clan.

However, even here he is likely to feel thwarted because he has been anticipated by another young man of wealth. I refer to Mr. Seward Collins who formerly owned and edited The Bookman and now owns and edits The American Review, the highbrow fascist organ of America. Mr. Collins has also been engaged in placing his message in the hands of the select and his success has been astonishing. The group turns out to be so select as to be virtually invisible. Mr. Palmer may feel that he is fully capable of giving Mr. Collins a contest but it is nothing to bank on. Mr. Collins has several years' start and considerable experience in selectivity. At the present moment, he has got it so fine that he is practically his own sole reader and Mr. Collins is a bachelor. Mr. Palmer, on the other hand, is married and the Lewisohn connections are wide. It is rather a dilemma. Married, Mr. Palmer can never overtake Mr. Collins. Unmarried, he wouldn't have The Mercury.

The Screen

WALTER WANGER was fascinated by Fortune's success story *The Shanghai Boom,* by the plight of the White Guards in China and by the enormous publicity that Barbara Hutton was getting. So he gave one of these themes to each of the three writers of *Shanghai* (Paramount) and they "married" the three into one original tale about the fifth largest city in the world.

In it Charles Boyer (a good actor and fascinating personality) impersonates a Russian emigre whose mother was Chinese. Dimitri Kosalow, as he is called in the film, becomes Shanghai's tycoon with the help of Warner Oland who can't forget that he is not playing Charlie Chan. Kosalow and America's most photographed heiress Barbara (Hutton) Howard played by the water-eyed Loretta Young, fall in love. But woe to the loves between a half-caste and a white woman! They break and make up again. Then they break up again and make up once more. Then after Kosalow exposes himself to Shanghai's smart set and they snub him, the lovers are separated yet again. This time, however, Kosalow runs away—up the Yangtze River. But Barbara realizing that she really loves him and that Kosalow's mother after all was a princess, she runs after him. After some scenes on the Yangtze, which are taken from that extraordinary Fox travelogue, *Gorges of the Giants,* the twain do meet. But this is not the end, for we see them in Shanghai again, determined to conquer the world. The Chinese sage and banker warns his friend that it won't work. It will mean certain disgrace for him and his wife. The sage clinches the argument when he informs Kosalow that his mother didn't live a happy life, but committed suicide. And so Wanger, who once advertised for a fascist America with *Gabriel Over the White House* and *The President Vanishes* advertises that Kipling *was* right: "East is East. . . ." But his hero and heroine, in a final close-up make the following missionary speech:

> Some day this prejudice against race and creed will be gone and men and women will be accepted for what they are . . . it probably won't come in our lifetime, but let us pray to God that it will come. . . .

That's the story. Basically it is no different from any other American film about China—Nazimova's *The Red Lantern* or the Hearst-Warner *Oil for the Lamps of China.* You will find the usual references to the Chinese Communists as bandits, the usual crocodile tears for the Russian White Guards and the usual evasion about the Japanese. Like the others, this film concentrates on the few thousand foreigners who compose the International Settlement. Not a single American film has even suggested that the real story about Shanghai is in the 3,000,000 Chinese workers who make up the population of that city. Only one film has portrayed that side of it, *Shanghai Document;* but that was prejudiced and one sided, because it was a Soviet film.

PETER ELLIS.

Between Ourselves

JOSEPH NORTH, one of the editors of THE NEW MASSES, is in Terre Haute, Ind.; reporting the general strike there. An article by him on the strike will appear in next week's issue.

Joshua Kunitz has arrived in the Soviet Union and we expect to have the first of the articles he will write for THE NEW MASSES for publication in an early issue.

A series is in preparation on the status of science under capitalism, to cover medicine, science in industry and agriculture, science and shelter, etc. which we expect to begin publishing with the next quarterly issue, October 1. Each subject will be treated by a specialist in that field.

THE NEW MASSES' circulation department would be glad to hear from readers who are spending some time in August and September in summer camps where they would be willing to handle a weekly bundle of NEW MASSES by selling them there. There is a potentially large field for increased circulation for THE NEW MASSES in such resorts. Camp Nitgedaiget and Camp Unity, for instance, both increased their regular bundle orders this week.

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